



Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

May 2015

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Our Outlook

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Sunday Services | May 2015

May 3 | *Flower Communion*

Join us for a time-honored UU tradition celebrating the dignity, beauty, and diversity of human beings. All are welcome to bring a flower to share (flowers will also be provided). This is a service for all ages.

-Rev. Celie Katovitch



May 10 | *No Matter What*

A sermon about Universalism & Mothers' Day.

-Rev. Celie Katovitch



May 17 | *Perfectly Miserable*

The sermon purchased by John Lukes at our annual auction, on the topic of perfectionism.

-Rev. Celie Katovitch



May 24 | *Why Be Good?*

It's a question people have been asking Universalists for ages.

-Rev. Celie Katovitch



May 31 | *Favorite Hymn Sing*

Do you enjoy raising your voice in song together with the other members of our beloved community? This is the service for you. Join Worship Associates Verdis Robinson and Bridget Watts in singing some of the congregation's favorite hymns and sharing a few words about what they mean to us.

Garden Service | At 6:15 PM on Friday, May 29th, there will be an outdoor service in the garden. This brief service will celebrate the promise of planting season in word & song. Members of the garden committee will be present following the service to talk about our church's *Lots of Food* urban gardening project. Stay tuned for further details.

Worship service begins at 10:30am Sundays





Pastor's Ponderings

Message from Rev. Celie Katovitch

On my office door hangs a quote from the 15th-century Indian poet Kabir: "Suppose you scrub your ethical skin until it shines, but inside there is no music-- then what?"

I am mulling those words as we approach May, a month during which our worship will twice touch on questions of what it means to be good, and to do good. Often, Unitarian Universalism is described as an "ethical religion" : a faith where actions, rather than professed beliefs, are the measure of our living. Our faith must indeed find expression in our day-to-day deeds, or it withers, and leaves the world around us untouched.

That said, ethics is a complicated tapestry (more complicated even than politics), in which simultaneously held values-- such as those embedded in our seven principles-- often pull against one another, leaving us to negotiate a balance between them. Deeds-- even good deeds-- come from a variety of motivations, conscious and unconscious. This does not mean that we should be neutral about issues, and it certainly does not mean we should take no action. It does mean that it is hard work to navigate (in the words of environmentalist and author Barbara Kingsolver) "the great shifting terrain between righteousness and what is right."

Kabir's words remind me of that truth. They remind me that an "ethical religion" is what we live when our moral convictions dialogue with the music of Transcending Mystery and Wonder, and our experience of living together in community with our fellow human beings. When it comes to the consumer culture, religion often sounds the call to "voluntary simplicity": to a life where meaning comes not from wealth and accumulation of stuff, but from everyday, simple gifts. In another sense, though, religion summons us to "voluntary complexity." It asks us to open our eyes to a bigger picture: to see moral issues not in black-and-white terms, but against a backdrop of life's depth and multiplicity. It asks us to hold our strongest ethical convictions in creative tension with awareness of, and gentleness toward, the human foibles that limit others' ideas and our own. It asks us to hear the music in that tension.

It can be a surprisingly beautiful music.

May love guide us in this holy work. In faith, --Celie ❖



Walking Together:

Director of Life Span Faith Development

Submitted by Michelle Yates, DRE

As many of you know, I was recently granted preliminary fellowship as a UU minister. Thank you all so much for your support, and congratulations! As all people know, significant milestones on our journeys are only possible with lots of time, effort, heartbreak, and joy.

Given my recent affirmation of my path, I feel called to reflect on all the winding journeys of discernment we take in life. Should we pursue higher education or enter the work force? What kind of work can we do or do we want to do? Which relationships? Marriage? Children? Military Service? A call to create art or music? There are so many paths and not enough time to take them all. As we journey along, trying out many paths and identities, it feels so good to be affirmed along the way.

To hear, "You are really good at that!" But sometimes it is even more important to find reassurance and love when things don't go well. To find the soothing balm of, "You tried. I'm proud of you," and "You just haven't found your niche yet. You will!"

This is why in life it is so spiritually critical to find **connection**; a sense of **belonging to** and **in** this life no matter how the path may wind. Whether it be friends, family, other community (a church community perhaps?) or a sense of the holy, finding and knowing your interconnections on the "interdependent web" to lean on will hold you in good times and bad.

This month, I encourage you to remind yourself and others of these **sacred connections**. Consider who you could go to and talk to in times of distress. Remember to put your Minister or faith development director on that list! Remind people in your life if you want them to know you are there to love and support them; to be on *their* list.

What are the connections that hold and save you? Are you satisfied with your connections with others? Are there relationships that you would like to strengthen? What could you do to grow your sense connection and belonging this month?

Yours in Faith,
Michelle ❖

Our UU Faith in Action

Young Adult Connections Forming

We are happy to announce two new connections resources for young adults.* First, an outing to Victor to have brunch at India House and go hiking at Ganondagan is being planned for after the service on June 7th. If interested, please contact Steve Farrington. Additionally, a “First Universalist Young Adults” facebook group is up and running at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/588881594547557>.

* The UUA designates the age range of 18-35 as ‘Young Adult’; anyone who falls in or around this age range, OR who identifies as a younger adult in our congregation, is welcome!

Help Clean Up Our Park

The city of Rochester’s “Clean Sweep” is happening on May 2nd. One of the parks being cleaned up will again be Washington Square Park, right across the street First Universalist. This is a chance to beautify our church neighborhood, and to “serve the community” that most immediately surrounds us. ❖

New Members!

Submitted by Nancy Gaede

On Sunday, April 12, the congregation joyfully welcomed the following people into membership:

Rachael & John Baldanza

Lew Ward-Baker	Suzie & Franky Gutierrez
Jared Van Cor	Carole Hoffman
M.J. Curry	Ginger Sykes
Katherine Flynn	Moritz Wagner
Richard Gilbert	Jessie Werner

We are delighted that you have found a spiritual home with us, and look forward to getting to know you better and to walking with you on your journey to explore and deepen your faith.

If you feel that you have found that First Universalist is where you belong and wish to become a member, please contact Reverend Celie (minister@uuroc.org) or Nancy Gaede (flower50@frontiernet.net) ❖

Making a Difference

Submitted by Newcomb Losh, Communications Committee

We are an inclusive faith community, living our values and making a difference in the world. This is the who-we-are, what-we-do and why-it-matters statement that members and friends of our congregation developed in a November 2014 workshop. This is our brand identity.

Our brand is not aimed at a particular demographic – no one age group, no one education level, no one ideology. We recognize that each person is on his or her own search for truth and meaning in life.

It feels strange to say we have a brand, as if we’re slick Madison Avenue types intent on reducing our congregation to a jingle to sell a product no one really needs. Some people will need us, some won’t. Some who may need us don’t know we exist – yet. Using our brand identity in all we do will increase our visibility. More people will know they have an additional choice for developing or expressing spirituality.

We Unitarian Universalists strive to be bold in our support of social justice, to be compassionate to all of our fellow human beings, and we unite to grapple with the meaning of life and how to better live our values each day. This is the brand identity of our central organization, the UUA. Whenever we undertake any church activity, whether it’s social justice work, developing a Sunday service, or serving on a committee, we each need to blend in our church’s brand identity questions: am I inclusive, am I living my values, am I making a positive difference?

Unitarian Universalism will be known far and wide as a force for good in the world when we can consistently answer “yes.” ❖



Our own Marie Sidoti lives her inclusive values and makes a difference by marching for ROC for \$15 on April 15

**Church’s annual meeting
will be June 7 immediately
after the service.**

Notes from District Assembly

Submitted by Ed Deller

A combined District Assembly (DA) was held for the St. Lawrence and Ohio-Meadville districts on March 27-28 in Niagara Falls. Representing First Universalist were Micky Toker and Ed Deller as delegates, and Newcomb Losh as a general attendee. We joined hundreds of UUs for fellowship and enrichment in worship, talks and workshops with a general theme of Broad Wings, Deep Roots. The Rev. Tom Chulak gave the Gould Lecture. He encouraged us to look at the whole being greater than the sum of parts, especially in the context of UU congregations. This theme was reinforced by the Rev. Scott Taylor in his keynote speech, which encouraged increased inter-congregation group activities along the lines of the GUUSTO cluster of which we're a part.

Workshops were offered on a variety of topics. Newcomb, Micky and I attended ones dealing with Regionalization, Volunteer Support, Creating a Culture of Service and Budgeting to Fund your Vision. You are welcome to catch us at coffee hour to hear about them. Many of the materials will also be available on the CERG (Central East Regional Group) web site, <http://www.cerguua.org/>, at some point.

In the business section of the meeting our own Michelle George Yates was elected to the St. Lawrence District Nominating and Leadership Development Committees. Congratulations Michelle!

We will be hearing more about regionalization over the coming months as proposals are finalized regarding the structure of districts and regions and the role of the UUA as it relates to them. Once proposals are ready, congregations will have a vote in the process. Stay tuned!

I found the District Assembly to be inspiring and well worth attending. The warmth and optimism from this assembly of like-minded souls was contagious. I encourage others to consider attending future DAs. ❖



Stewardship 2015

Submitted by the Finance Team

Let Your Voice Be Heard!

Thank you, thank you! As of this writing, most First Universalist members and friends have made a pledge to support the 2015-16 budget. Your voice has been heard! With the missing pledges from last year and a few new ones, we should be on track to meet or surpass last year's totals.

Thanks to Glenda Brayman and Howard Spindler for heading up this year's campaign. As co-chairs, they kept it fun, informative, and productive. Thanks also to Bill Jones and the finance team for materials and record keeping. And finally, thanks to all who brought pies to share on Stewardship Sunday!

If you forgot to make your pledge, or have recently made the decision to do so, it's never too late! Please contact Bill Jones at jones@chem.rochester.edu to make your pledge via e-mail, or request a pledge card.

Finance Facts

When you look at our church's finance reports, you see that there are many "special" and "discretionary" funds which are outside of our annual budget. These special funds are an important part of our church's financial health, and they don't often get much attention. From time to time, we'll use the Outlook to share some information on what these funds are for, and how they work!

Memorial Fund

This special fund grows when contributions are made to the church in memory of someone, and the contribution hasn't come with any other specific instructions. The fund allows members and friends to honor someone who has died, whether or not they were a member of this church. The Memorial fund can be used to support church programs as determined by the Board of Trustees. Recent uses have included leadership training, and benches for a memorial garden. Contributions to the Memorial Fund are accepted at any time—simply indicate "Memorial Fund" on the memo line of your check. ❖



The Family Car

Submitted by Marti Eggers



Between May and December of 2014, 7 families living in their cars were referred to RAIHN, the Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network. RAIHN was able to accept three of these families into the program, and all three are now living in permanent housing...with a roof over their heads, a bathroom down the hall, and the ability to adjust the thermostat – simple amenities that we all take for granted.

One of the mothers has given permission to share her story. This mom came into the program in the summer of 2014. She had been sleeping in her car with her 4 children at a nearby park. She was homeless after falling behind in rent due to her hours being cut back at work and coinciding car repairs. This had been her first apartment on her own after leaving a 13-year, abusive relationship. In the year since she left her partner, she studied for and was awarded her CDL driving license. She found full-time (but seasonal) employment driving a city school bus and managed to save enough money to buy a vehicle. When the family was referred to RAIHN, she and the children had been sleeping in the car at a nearby park for nearly a week. Within 2 weeks after coming into the RAIHN program, she found an apartment. She continues to stay in touch with us and, while life is not easy living on the edge of poverty and raising four children, she continues to work, maintains her car, and provides a warm, caring home for her children. Her strength of spirit is incredible.

This mom's journey is possible in part because of the hundreds of volunteers and donors who open their hearts and hold out their hands to indicate an awareness of and a caring for the families served by RAIHN. Using the model of interfaith hospitality, families realize that grace and warmth have not disappeared from this world. You may have missed the Car City sleepover, RAIHN's largest fundraiser of the year, but you can still support Team **VirtUUal** on line until June 1st. You can go to www.raihn.org and follow the donate buttons, or go directly to the Team **VirtUUal** donor page with this link -

<http://tinyurl.com/mlet3lx>

Every donation will help the team meet its goal. Help us raise awareness that: A car should not be a replacement for a home...



Keeping families together
Getting families home for good. ❖

Calling all Gardeners

Submitted by Sarah Singal



There will be a planting party on Tuesday, May 19, from 1 to 4. If it is pouring rain we will gather on another day. We will be installing new plants in our vegetable garden in the southwest alcove outside the church off Clinton Avenue. We don't need an army of people but you can get some instruction about what plants remain and what are weeded out, and you can sign up for the watering schedule, which will need more people than we have had in years past, as we will be watering both vegetable and flower gardens, and will be watering for a longer season.

This year spring clean up day will be held on Saturday, May 30th. In recent years we have used this time to spruce up the flower garden and planters, and that will be possible this year as well. If you'd like, bring a plant. The three planters along Court St. will need something tall and spikey, something colorful in the mid-range, and some plants cascading over the sides. One planter gets partial sun, and the two others get shade, shade, shade. We will try for Flower Pot Pot Luck and see what we get! After finishing up outside, please come inside and help with the much needed indoor cleaning, especially of our RAIHN guest rooms. Thank you, one and all! ❖



Library News

Submitted by Keith Stott



How much do the children in our religious education program come to (dis)believe in God?

How far do you/we influence their religious beliefs and living?

How much does it matter?

For an intense, thought-provoking, inspiring discussion of these matters by author Dr. Robert Coles who includes many anecdotes and drawings by children (example: "The Planet Where God Lives"), visit our church library and pick up *The Spiritual Life of Children*. Call number is 291.4 C.

Welcome to Our Table

Submitted by Joy Leccese, Board Member

On a chilly April morning (all too familiar to us by now), I found myself greeting the day with the following brief journal entry, and realized afterwards that it describes what we as UU's are about, so I want to share it with you.

“And now, I accept the gift of today, with all its beauty, its potential, its calling. I ask the Beloved Within, ‘Who am I today to the world? To whom do I bring loving kindness, compassion, and the proverbial cup of cool water?’”

As I leave my house, journey outward, to ‘save the only life you can – yours’ (a la David Whyte and Mary Oliver), where does the energy want to take me? Where does it want to go? (Thank you, Alan Seale for that mantra.) Who needs forgiveness today? Who needs encouragement to forgive themselves for past transgressions, omissions, and failures to show up fully? Who needs to be embraced in loving kindness and radical acceptance, without judgment or criticism? Who needs a helping hand of compassion, without the chokehold of pity or prejudice?

Who needs me today to step outside my own comfort zone and look past our differences, to the place of infinite horizons, where we are all one – where our interconnection is not merely acknowledged verbally, but experienced viscerally?

Who needs that healing cup of kindness which, when shared, transforms both the giver and the receiver? Whose candle needs lighting, whose thirst needs quenching? Who is hungry today in my path, and what of my own gifts can I share?”

This is Radical Hospitality, I realized, not merely as professed UU's, but in our universal unity as human beings. To ask these questions, I thought, is to live our faith as UU's. It is one personal expression at a time of Radical Hospitality. I am honored to belong to this beloved community, where so many have said that they felt welcomed the moment they entered our doors for the first time. I call it a “come as you are party”, and that is something to celebrate. ❖



Eastman at Washington Square Thursday Lunchtime Concerts

Spring 2015

12:15 p.m.–12:45 p.m.

Free admission.

Brown Bag lunches are welcome.



April 30 | *The Romantic Pianist*

Michele Steffers, from the studio of ECMS faculty Irina Lupines, performs music of Schubert, Rachmaninoff and Scriabin.

May 7 | *ONYX Clarinet Quartet*

Enjoy music in a variety of genres performed by clarinetists Laurie Dobmeier, Terryann Gerber, Roxanne Woy and Alan Woy.

May 14 | *Honors Finale I*

Our first installment of the ECMS Honors Grads.

May 21 | *Honors Finale II*

A second installment of the ECMS Honors Grads!

May 28 | *Honors Finale III*

One more fabulous concert of the Honors Graduates from the ECMS!

Concerts resume in October. ❖

*Yesterday is but a dream, and
tomorrow is only a vision:*

*But today well lived makes every
yesterday a dream of happiness,*

And every tomorrow a vision of hope.

From the Sanskrit

Hymns of the Spirit,

Universalist Publishing House, 1940

Drop-In Discussion, May Schedule

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

Drop-in discussions are held each Sunday at 9:15 a.m. (except in July and August) in the adult lounge on the second floor of our church. Sometimes our discussions are based on certain books or articles, but you don't have to read anything or do any advance preparation to participate. Just drop in. People of all viewpoints are welcome to make presentations or join in the discussions.

May 3 | *Free and Fair Trade*

Congress will soon consider the *Trans Pacific Partnership* agreement involving the USA and 11 other Pacific nations. Critics say its purpose is to enact the corporate agenda into international law. Phil Ebersole will make a presentation on the TPP.

May 10 | *Speciesism*

What makes us think we are better than other living beings? Is there any justification for discrimination against nonhuman animals, based on their species or other irrelevant characteristics? Beth Ares will lead a discussion of speciesism.

May 17 | *Open Forum Discussion*

May 24 | *Manifest Destiny*

Was there a time in American history when we Americans did things that are just as bad as what ISIS is doing now? Harvey Rothbeind will lead a discussion of the Indian Wars and other episodes of American history.

May 31 | *Open Forum Discussion*

If you have a topic you'd like discussed or, better still, would like to do a presentation or lead a discussion, speak to Phil Ebersole. ❖

The
LUUnch
BUUnch
May 2015



Raj Mahal
Indian
Restaurant

368 Jefferson Rd.
Near Goodwill.

12:30 on Sunday, May 24. ❖

House News May 2015

Submitted by Tom Ruganis

The snow is finally gone so that means time to clean up our beloved building and grounds!

In addition to the **Garden Committee's Planting Day** on Tuesday May 19th there will be a building wide Spring Cleanup day on Saturday May 30th. Note that this is NOT Memorial Day weekend.

As this has been a particularly hard winter for dust and dirt, in addition to our normal activities and small repairs, we will be concentrating on building wide cleanliness. In particular, our RAIHN guest rooms and hallways need a good spring cleaning. Areas around windows, corners of ceilings, all flat surfaces, could use detail work. And scuff marks on the floors, spots on rugs need attention.

Bring your favorite cleaning solutions and we will also supply some, too. It will be great to have a freshly cleaned facility for our next RAIHN rotation beginning June 14th. Please let the house committee know of any other cleaning or small repairs that you would like to have addressed. If you would like to lend a hand with this cleaning, minor repairs or smoke alarm/emergency lighting checks, please let us know or just show up! Morning snacks and a light lunch will be provided.

In other news...

- The mystery of the unpleasant odor mentioned in the March Outlook has been resolved. While cleaning out the downspout traps, our new plumber discovered a broken pipe that was allowing sewer gas to enter the crawl space under the office. Needless to say, this was repaired, and at a minimal cost. In addition all accessible traps have been cleaned.
- The carbon monoxide detector in the kitchen was set off when both ovens were being operated. Since a small amount of CO is generated when natural gas is burned it is recommended that the detector be installed at least 15–20 feet from fuel burning appliances. To minimize the risk of false alarms the detector will be moved to a different part of the kitchen. Another clean-up day project! ❖

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First Universalist Church

150 South Clinton Avenue

Rochester, NY 14604

First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY

Nurture the spirit and serve the community

First Universalist Church is a member of the Unitarian-Universalist Association, a liberal religion with historical roots from the Jewish and Christian traditions.

Worship service begins at 10:30am Sundays

Minister | Rev. Celie Katovitch

Director of Life Span Faith Development | Michelle Yates

Music Director | Bryan Holten

Sexton | Brandon Fagan

Nursery Care Provider | Carol Williams

Office Administrator | Kris White

Office hours, Tuesday through Friday, 8:30am–2:45pm. Telephone 585.546.2826

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More information is available on our website: <http://uuroc.org>.