

Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester **February 2014**

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Sunday Services | February 2014

February 2 | *10 Commandments – Or Is it 8, or 11?*
If you were going to create some rules for living, what would they be? Would your rules be specific to you, or generic, for everyone?
– Rev. Martha Munson

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February 9 | *Theodicy: the Problem of Evil*
Evil is a source of no small distress among religious liberals. Where does the "bad stuff" come from and why can't (don't) we do more to combat it?
– Rev. Martha Munson

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Feb 16 | *Where the Wild Things Are: Cultivating the Dark*
"Where the Wild Things Are: Cultivating the Dark" The poet May Sarton writes, "Help us to be the always hopeful gardeners of the spirit, who know that without darkness nothing comes to birth, as without light, nothing flowers." What's hiding in our shadow selves? How do we embrace the dark side of our lives and become more whole?
– Rev. Elizabeth Moore, member of First Unitarian Church in Rochester.

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February 23 | *This I Believe*
I'll venture out on this "limb" this morning, and I invite you to join me. What is it you believe?
– Rev. Martha Munson

If the Rochester Schools are closed, the church office is closed.
Sunday Service cancellations will appear on Channel 13.

Our regular morning service as well as Religious Education classes begin at 10:30am.



Walking With You

Message from the Interim Minister, Martha Munson

It seems now like quite a long time ago that I arrived at First Universalist and then became your Interim Minister. As our time winds down, I invite you to consider again the tasks set out for us together, supported by the Board and facilitated by the Transition Team. My central work is to help you position yourselves strongly to call your next settled minister. How are we doing? I invite your feedback and your reflection, especially as you see things that might be addressed in the months ahead. Please e-mail or call me, or speak to any member of the Transition Team (Karl Abbot, Bill Elwell, Mary Louise Gerek, Ann Rhody). What a wonderful time this has been (is being)! You're a great congregation, UUism's "Downtown Gem". -- Yep!

Five Tasks Of Interim Ministry
adapted from *Temporary Shepherds* by Roger Nicholson

1. Coming to Terms with History (The good and the bad)
2. Discovering a New Identity (Who are we now?)
3. Empowering & Equipping New Leadership
4. Renewing Denominational Linkages
5. Preparing for New Professional Leadership

Yours, faithfully,
Martha ✣



Gleanings

Rev. Lori Staubitz, Director of Religious Education

How do I foster spirituality for my (grand)child is a question that I have been asked by members of our congregation. Given some of the harsh realities of our times, violence, materialism and limited access to the natural environment tend to loom over the heart of childhood. Parents and grandparents can have a positive impact upon a child's faith development when they offer life affirming alternatives for play.

The word recreation....is a time set apart to "Re-create", to expand horizons and find a way to be at ease in the world. Unitarian Universalist principles and values truly can be "caught" rather than "taught" through story, song, cooperative peace games, gardening, cooking or a quiet, respectful walk in the woods.

So next time you hear a little voice ask..."What are we going to do now?" I hope you feel empowered to turn off the electronics and tune into the tending of your playful spirits!

Peace, Shalom-Lori ✣

District Assembly 2014: March 28-29, Erie PA

Submitted by Board Chair, Edward Deller

This year's District Assembly is a joint effort with the Ohio-Meadville District and the St. Lawrence District. District Assembly will take place March 28-29, 2014 at the Avalon Hotel and Convention Center, Erie, PA. All members and friends of the congregation are invited to attend.

The Rev. Meg Barnhouse is the keynote speaker. Her keynote address is titled Seeds of the Spirited Life. Gould Lecturer is Rev. Priscilla Richter, speaking on Ours Is No Caravan of Despair:Unitarian Universalism Responds to the Challenges of Our Times.

Among our attendees, two may be designated as official delegates. If you would like to serve in this capacity, please contact Tom Williams at busterdawg_1947@yahoo.com

For more information about the District Assembly, visit: http://www.sld.uua.org/conggrowth/districtassembly.html. Thank you, Ed ✣



Regionalization

Submitted by Michael Scott

For most of its 53-year history, the Unitarian Universalist Association has been organized by districts. In recent years there have been 19 of these. Those in the Northeast (Unitarian Universalism's historic stronghold) are geographically small; those in the West quite large). The UUA Board of Trustees, in turn, has historically included a representative from each of the districts, plus several at-large and *ex officio* members, for a total of 25.

Many people have felt a strong connection to their districts, and to "their" representative on the UUA Board. Others have complained that the system was too unwieldy. It has been estimated, for example, that the district boards spend half a million dollars, in the aggregate, on meeting logistics every year.

With the financial crisis of 2008, calls to streamline the denomination's governance reached a head, and the UUA Board began making plans. In 2011 and 2012 (in a process that requires votes in two separate years), the UUA General Assembly approved changes to the UUA Bylaws that reduced the Board to only 14 members, all *ex officio* or elected at-large—no more district representatives. Meanwhile, districts have been encouraged to consolidate their activities into five large geographic "regions." The change has been facilitated, to some degree at least, by increased use of electronic rather than in-person communications.

The regionalization process is moving at different rates in different places. Here in New York, our own Saint Lawrence District has partnered with the Metro New York District, the Ohio Meadville District to our west, and the Joseph Priestly District to our south to create the Central East Regional Group, or CERG. By pooling resources, the four districts are moving from tiny district staffs in which each person had to be a generalist to larger regional staffs in which each person can specialize—one for Faith Development, one for Growth, one for Leadership Development, one for Communications—but for a much larger number of congregations.

This past year, the Central Midwest, Heartland, and Prairie Star districts voted to disband entirely, and to replace themselves with a single MidAmerica Region. At the UUA General Assembly in June, delegates approved Bylaw and Rule changes that (once confirmed in 2014) remove all references to those four districts and replace the word "districts" with "districts and regions" throughout the document.

Denominational leaders are optimistic that the new system can both reduce costs and improve the delivery of services. It remains to be seen how much community is lost with geographic dispersion, however, and how well a fully at-large Board represents the full denomination. Certainly there are individuals who are very unhappy with the change, and others who are very excited.

One immediately visible effect of regionalization for us will be this year's District Assembly, which will be held jointly with Ohio Meadville—March 28–29 in Erie, PA. We hope to send a very large delegation. To join the fun, contact the Minister, the President, or any Board member.

For a map of the **districts and regions**, visit uua.org/directory/districts/

To learn more about **CERG**, visit cerguua.org

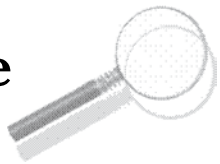
For the **District Assembly,** visit sld.uua.org/conggrowth/districtassembly.html. ❖

Membership

Submitted by Nancy Gaede

We have ordered some new pamphlets from the UUA Bookstore that we think might be of interest to you as well as to newcomers to First Universalist. Look for them in the pamphlet racks in the Clara Barton Lounge. We would appreciate your feedback. Are they interesting? Informative? Worth re-ordering? Do you know of any others that we might want to order? Please contact Nancy Gaede at flower50@frontiernet.net with any ideas that you may have. ❖

It's Pre-Candidating Time



Submitted by the Ministerial Search Committee

It may be cold in Rochester, NY, but things are heating-up with the Ministerial Search!

In early January the committee received the names of the ministers who expressed interest in our church, after reading our Congregational Record on the UUA's Transitions web site. With the names came the Ministerial Records of each interested minister, which the committee read and discussed. From this list we chose the ministers with whom we wanted to exchange packets--web sites with in-depth information about our congregation, and in the case of the ministers, about their ministries and themselves.

The next step was to choose which ministers we wanted to interview by phone or Skype, which happened later in January. Right now, we are in the midst of pre-candidating the ministers who have impressed us as being the right fit for our congregation. Pre-candidating includes meeting the ministers in person, interviewing them, and hearing them preach in a neutral pulpit setting. From this short-list we'll choose the candidate to present to our congregation in April, during Candidating Week.

This whole process requires strict confidentiality. We can't tell you numbers, names, or characteristics of interested ministers, because doing so could jeopardize their relationships with their current congregations. But, it won't be long before you will meet our best candidate.

If you don't see much of us during February and March, be assured that you are constantly on our minds as we work together to find the best minister for our church! ❖

Can You Feel The Change?

Submitted by Ann Rhody

We can! The Transition Team meetings have been filled with our observations of the wonderful things going on at church. We have a welcome table during coffee hour. Folks are making it a point to engage with visitors and those less familiar with the congregation. Congregation members are stepping up to fill in volunteer roles at church, as many leaders are involved with Board work, House, or Search tasks. The small changes we've worked on are making a positive difference.

So let's keep going! Last month we talked about our tendency to be "conflict-averse." This month, let's take a look at another occurrence regarding conflict: the issue of ***triangulation***. This is when we talk about our displeasure with someone or something at church to a person other than the one with whom we are disappointed.

Triangulation is nothing new in our congregation –or in any group, for that matter. While the practice is not widespread, or causing irreparable harm to us, it is change-worthy. Here's why:

- Triangulation inhibits true and meaningful communication
- It keeps us from building a healthy level of intimacy, trust, and community
- It puts leaders in a position where they have to be thinking about who might be angry with them and not telling them. This adds a level of stress to leadership roles that doesn't really need to be there!

So what can we do? Well of course, if you have a "beef" with someone at church, find a time to talk to that person face to face. It helps to assume good intentions- many times, I am not even aware that I have made a mistake or have hurt someone. I always appreciate a chance to "make it right" when I have made an error.

If someone comes to you with an issue involving someone else, offer to go with that person to speak with the involved party- and right away. Resist the urge to "fight someone else's battle." It may seem like a favor, but it keeps the involved people from the blessing of solving their own problems in a healthy way.
So here's to our continued small steps forward… and what is sure to be a bright future.

Ann Rhody for the Transition Team
Karl Abbott, Chair; Bill Elwell, Mary Louise Gerek ❖

Two Bits from your Finance Friends

Submitted by Ann Rhody

• **Our Service Auction**:
Something for Everyone! Be There February 2!

Our annual Service Auction is on Sunday, February 2 after the church service. ALL are welcome! We'll enjoy lunch, fellowship, laughs, and at the same time we'll be supporting our church's mission and programs.

Whatever your budget, there will be something to bid on: in the past, auction items have ranged from $5 to over $200. Our auction is designed to include everyone. And our auction is user-friendly: no fast talk or secret bidding signs; no experience necessary and instructions included!

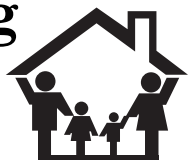
To see a donation booklet, or to get a proxy form (for those who can't be at the auction) just visit the church's website at uuroc.org, or contact Ann Rhody at annrhody@yahoo.com.

• **Our Holiday Shoppe**- A True Gift to our Church!

The Holiday Shoppe brought in just over $1,000 in funds raised for our church! Thanks all who contributed to this success: too many names to list here, but if you made or donated items to sell, shopped with us during coffee hour, or worked to set up or staff the table, you are part of our success story. Special thanks to Paula Marchese and Lauretta Young for their leadership with this project.

Ann Rhody for the Finance Committee ❖

A Holiday Giving *Thank You*



Submitted by Sarah Singal

School 7 thanks all who donated hats, scarves, mittens, and toys to children at the school, and also thanks those who donated food over Thanksgiving. And special thanks to those who work with the children as tutors and classroom aides every week. Neither the school nor RAIHN were able to use the stuffed animals, so they were given to The Guest House, a family shelter run by Volunteers of America. The animals will be used for presents at the monthly birthday parties for whoever is in the shelter at the time, and the staff is delighted to have these animals to give joy to their youngsters. ❖

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Lots of Food Update

Submitted by Sarah Singal

The Board of Trustees has given permission to use money from the Memorial Fund to buy eight planters and two benches to put in out *Lots of Food* garden. In addition to the permaculture offering of public food, there will be memorial plaques on each bench, honoring the memory of members from past years associated with financial donations in their names. The Board has requested that implementation of the plans be delayed until roof repairs have been completed. The planting of a miniature pear tree and four fruit bushes will take place either in the fall of 2014 or the spring of 2015. ❖

2020 is The *250th Anniversary* of UNIVERSALISM IN AMERICA

- Love With No Exceptions -

A **visioning meeting** to shape this celebration is being held at Murray Grove February 28–March 2, 2014.

Wanted:
All who have ideas for how to celebrate, promote Universalism for our time.



Murray Grove Retreat & Renewal Center

Contact:

Carol Haag
RevCarolH@verizon.net
Murray Grove
murraygrove@murraygrove.org

Drop-In Discussion, February Schedule

Submitted by David Damico

Drop-in discussions are held each Sunday in the adult lounge on the second floor of our church at 9:15 a.m. except during the summer. 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. Here is the schedule.

Feb. 2 | *Identifying As a Muslim in America*
Do you ever wonder what to say to Muslim people in your life? Come see a very short film about identifying as a Muslim in America, and see how our beliefs can coexist well. Generally, the world today sees Muslims as "untouchable", people are afraid to start a conversation with a Muslim, worrying where to start, or how politically sensitive it could end up. Instead, find out how to see Muslims as just your average Jane or Joe, and how Muslims will welcome you as new friends. Sophia will present this group with the help of two local Muslim sisters. Bring any questions you may have. Facilitated by Sophia Fretter.

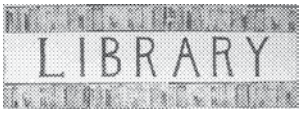
Feb. 9 | *How big box stores impact the community*
They offer cheap prices, all-in-one shopping and consistency from store to store, but what are the costs of having big box stores in your community? How do they impact local taxes, governments, politics, services, education, employment, traffic, and community organizations? What happens when a big box displaces a local business? Can this trend be stopped? Facilitated by Dwight Montague.

Feb. 16 | *The Paradox of Choice*
In his 2004 book, "The Paradox of Choice - Why More Is Less", American psychologist Barry Schwartz questions the need for the abundance of choices in our everyday life and whether they bring happiness or frustration. In this discussion, we will examine several of his concepts and how we might react in a given situation. The video discussing the book can be seen online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VO6XEQIsCoM>. Facilitated by David Damico.

Feb 23 | *Choosing Charity*
What is your favorite charity? How do you choose which charity to support? Janet Rothbeind will help us share our thoughts. (originally scheduled for Dec.)

If you have a topic to suggest, or, better still, would be willing to present or facilitate discussion of a topic you are interested in, speak to David Damico. ✣

Belief and Faith



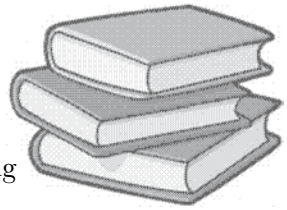
Submitted by Keith Stott

What is the difference between belief and faith? What is the true significance of our Christmas candles? Can there be life without war and affliction? These are just a few steps Howard Thurman takes the reader on a quest for meaning and fulfillment in his book of meditations, **The Inward Journey.** Call number is **242 T.**

An aside: our former minister Mark Morrison-Reed included Dr. Thurman's poem "The Work of Christmas" in his 1991 meditation manual Been in the Storm So Long. It was set to music by Keith Stott and performed by our choir in 1995. ✣



Book Club



Submitted by Shirley Bond

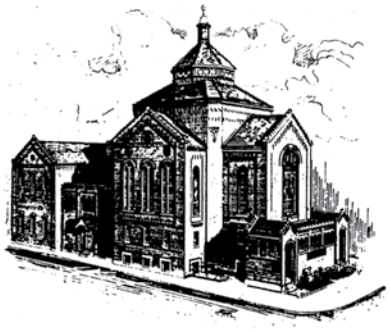
The Book Club will be discussing "Oxygen" by Carol Cassella.
Written by an anesthesiologist, this book looks into the political, legal,and human side of modern hospital care.

Please join us Sunday, February 23rd in the Adult Lounge @ 12:15. ✣

Auld Lang Syne

Submitted by Karen Dau, archivist

GEORGE WASHINGTON MONTGOMERY, founding minister of this church, was born on April 6, 1810 in Portland, ME and died on April 17, 1898 in Rochester. He began his career in the ministry in 1830 in Salem, MA. In quick succession he came to Buffalo, NY to serve for a year in missionary endeavors, organized a Universalist Society there in 1832, and established another new parish in Auburn in 1833. In 1843 he began a two-year pastorate in Portsmouth, NH, by then having established himself at age 35 as a highly desirable choice in his profession. Meanwhile, in November of 1845, a small and discouraged but determined cadre of Universalists in Rochester learned that Montgomery would be passing through the city in "the cars" on his way to Buffalo, the birthplace of his wife Elizabeth Baker Montgomery. Their two leaders, flour mill owner John H. Van Zandt and insurance executive George H. Roberts, the son of a preacher himself, made plans to "waylay" Montgomery at the train station and convince him to settle among them. He agreed, on condition that the congregation would at once arrange for construction of a church. Services of worship began in December in rented quarters at Minerva Hall, and in April of 1846, fifty-six members joyfully signed a charter incorporating The First Universalist Society of the City of Rochester. True to their word, the Society completed a new church edifice and dedicated it debt-free in January of 1848. Sadly, few records remain of Montgomery's eight-year pastorate. The incessant demands on the young pastor—so typical of their time—led to the development of severe aphonia, or the loss of his voice, so common in the ministry that it was known as "clergyman's sore throat," even though it was so much more than that. Resigning his pastorate in 1854 with a heavy heart, only forty-four years old, he remained in Rochester, and although he could no longer preach to his beloved people, he contributed tirelessly over the ensuing decades to Universalist publications and to the work of the NY State Convention of Universalists, and served as a founding trustee of St. Lawrence University. After recovering his voice some years later, he preached occasionally in Fairport, Middleport, Clifton Springs, Conesus, and Victor. Like most pastors of the time, he lived in poverty, and a parishioner, formerly of Niagara County, purchased a small home for his family on Chestnut Street. He and Elizabeth Montgomery were the parents of three children, all of whom died in infancy, and she lost her battle with consumption, or tuberculosis, in March of 1847. In September that same year he married Mary Jane Bliss, daughter of a Universalist family of East Avon who worshipped in the society at Conesus and whose parents had tragically died in their thirties. There were two sons and two daughters born to them, three of whom lived to adulthood. At the time of his death, Montgomery was recognized as a pre-eminent leader of nineteenth-century Universalism in this state. ❖



Printed Directory

Submitted by Nancy Gaede

It's been some time since a printed directory has been published. Before we do so, we want to be sure the information is accurate. We would like you to confirm, correct, or add your information by the end of February. Look for our master copy, along with directions, in the Clara Barton Lounge. ❖

Nursery Volunteers Needed

Submitted by Carol Williams

Carol Williams, our nursery care provider, is in need of volunteers to assist in the nursery on Sunday mornings from 10:15 to 12:15. If you are able to assist and would like to sign up for a rotating schedule, or a one time slot, please contact Carol at 663-4362. ❖

UNIRONDACK
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER IN THE ADIRONDACKS

Summer Camp for UU Youth and Families

Submitted by Dan Gottfried, Executive Director,
Unirondack-Unitarian Universalist Camp and Conference Center

Registration for UU summer camp experiences for our youth and families is under way. Sessions fill quickly at many of the UU Camp and Conference Centers and now is the time to register to avoid waiting lists.

Many youth from the region attend Unirondack, a UU Camp and Conference Center in the forever-wild Adirondacks in upstate New York. The camp provides an opportunity for children and families to live our UU values in a creative, accepting and nurturing community outside the doors of our congregation. For more information about Unirondack, and to register for summer camp or weekend programs, visit their website at http://www.unirondack.org/. If you have questions, we can be reached at 845-675-9001

Other Camp and Conference Centers in the region include *Rowe*, *Ferry Beach*, *Star Island*, and *Murray Grove*. In addition. for folks looking for experiences further from home, there is *DeBenneville Pines* in California, *Shelter Neck UU Camp* in Burgaw, NC, *U-Bar-U* in Texas, *Unistar* in Minnesota, and *The Mountain* in North Carolina.

Many of the centers have year-round programs, providing an opportunity for personal growth and fellowship. ✣

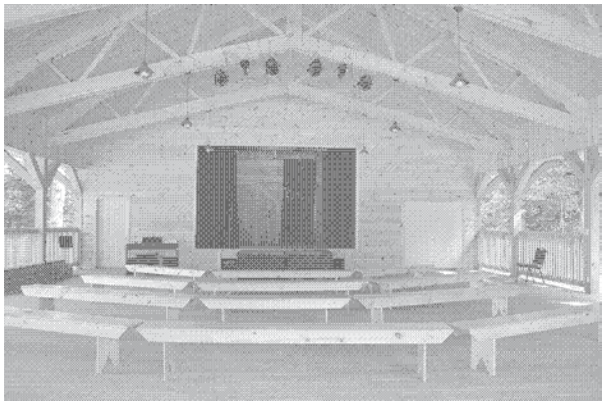


Boathouse at Unirondack



The Stevens Performing Arts Center located in lower camp is our lakeside gathering space for programs, performances and special events.

Stevens Inside



The newly renovated Showerhouse will provide the camp with 8 heated bedrooms, a meeting room, and a more sanitary, up-to-date space for showering.



Newly renovated Chadwick Cabin is heated and has a shower.



House Report Highlights - February 2014

Submitted by Alain Perregaux

Heating

The happy news is that the building came out of the early January cold spell unscathed. Unlike two years ago, no pipe froze. To a large extent it is due to the fact that, on the 3rd floor, the radiator settings were left unchanged and that all the interior doors were kept open. Thus, the temperature could equalize and no cold spot was able to develop in some vulnerable areas. Many thanks to the users of the 3rd floor who kept things under control.

Totally independently of the above, an ancient condensate pump failed on Dec. 29. The water backed up and leaked into the boiler room. During the worship service, Brandon Fagan and Michael vanArsdale kept the situation under control while a technician was called. It turns out that the pump was totally obsolete and that the condensate could be allowed to flow into the drain by gravity only.

Roof

The House Committee and the Board are working together to get our 25 year old roof redone this coming summer. The two key elements are: 1) identifying the right people to do the job and 2) finding a way to pay for it. Since the scaffolding alone will cost roughly $50,000, we will need to take full advantage of it, i.e. we will try to get the exterior brick walls repointed and the exterior window frames checked while the work on the roof is taking place. Strategies to get all this work done in the July-August time frame are under discussion. We will keep the congregation informed as solutions develop.

Court Street Lights

Michael Scott and Mike vanArsdale have identified appropriate fixtures. We still need to find the right way to pay for them. In view of the current weather, we are in no rush. We will give the Finance Committee and the Board all the time they need to find the best solution. ✣

Meadville Lombard Goes to Chautauqua

Meadville Lombard has created a perfect match between Unitarian Universalism and Chautauqua Institution.

In July 2014, Meadville Lombard will offer a unique summer course at Chautauqua Institution called *Crossing Boundaries: Multifaith Leadership in the New America*.

Students will participate in various communities of practice, attend lectures and cultural performances that draw on the viewpoints of various faith traditions, and be in dialogue with religious leaders who are working in the realm of multireligious leadership.

This week-long course is open to everyone - seminarians, lay leaders, clergy, and religious leaders. The course begins July 26th and will be taught by Lee Barker, President and Professor of Ministry and Interfaith Activist, Roger Doebke.

Guest lecturers will include:
Ted and Deborah First (Quaker); Ramallah as well as Neva Shalom, (a community founded by Trappist Monks in Israel as an experiment in pluralism); Rabbi Samuel Stahl (Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Beth - El in San Antonio, Texas); Sheik Mazin Alsahlani (leader of the Almakarim Islamic Foundation in Erie, Pennsylvania); Subagh and Subaha Khalsa (leaders of the Mystic Heart Meditation Program at the Chautauqua Institution); and Maureen Rovegno (M.Div., Harvard Divinity School), who coordinates a variety of interfaith engagements for the Chautauqua Institution.

Questions? Tina Porter, Sr. Director of Student Services can be reached at 312-212-0671.

Courtesy of the Meadville Lombard Theological School website. ✣

AND ✣ NOW ✣ ABIDETH ✣ FAITH
HOPE ✣ LOVE ✣ THESE ✣ THREE ✣ BUT
THE ✣ GREATEST ✣ OF ✣ THESE ✣ IS ✣ LOVE

First Universalist Church
150 South Clinton Avenue
Rochester, NY 14604

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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 services and Religious Education classes begin at 10:30am Sundays

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Minister | Rev. Martha Munson
Director of Religious Education | Rev. Lori Staubitz
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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Editor, Weekly *eOutlook*: Kris White; Monthly paper *Our Outlook,* David Damico/Marcy Klein
More information is available on our website: http://uuroc.org.