



Our Outlook

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**First Universalist
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Sunday Services | June 2026

June 7 | *“Make Church Gaye”*

When the LGBTQ Justice Circle asks, “Can we make church gaye?” the answer is always an emphatic YES. How are we all made better by a queer theology?

— Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell

June 14 | *Queer History and Personal Myth*

This Pride Month, Willow is presenting a guest sermon that blends discussion of trans history (focusing on Lili Elbe, the first person to medically and legally transition and her own personal story) and the story of Don Quixote to illustrate how personal myth, and fantastical artistic expression can be a form of affirmation of queer dignity and identity.

— Willow Shirtz

June 21 | *To Know and Be Known—Flower Communion*

Come celebrate the Summer Solstice and our annual flower communion service! We will consider the power of bearing witness. How is the spiritual experience of knowing one another and being known a building block of solidarity? Please bring a flower—or a few—if you’re able.

— Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell

June 28 | *General Assembly Worship*

Join us as we stream worship from the UUA 2026 General Assembly in our sanctuary. Through music, preaching, and ritual, we will ground ourselves in our Unitarian Universalist faith and be renewed for the work of justice, compassion, and community in the world.

— Rev. Jen Youngsun Ryu

❖ Services begin at 10:30am ❖

Worship will be online and in-person at First Universalist Church. Check our website for more updated info! Please join us – Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/131764422>; Phone number: 1-646-558-8656 with Meeting ID: 131 764 422. ❖



If You Didn't Read the Annual Report

A Message from
Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell

Not you, specifically. Of course you read it. Thoroughly and joyfully, I'm certain.

But in case you missed something in the 20-something pages of data about the past year in our congregation or you're one of the 18 new members who've never before heard of an annual report, let me offer a little summary of our first year together.

I was delighted to begin a two-year contract with this congregation in August, and I saw from the start that you were deeply committed to the care and protection of your neighbors in the face of a growing fascist movement. We found new ways (and maintained old ways) of showing up for our immigrant neighbors, unhoused neighbors, and LGBTQ+ neighbors in particular. We thought through broader and more strategic ways to keep doing that next year.

We had some major staff changes. We said goodbye to our bookkeeper, Maresa, and Emma's office role was expanded in response. We recently hired Cattie, a new childcare staff person, and are currently in a hiring process for a new musician to join Brock on our music ministry team. We're looking forward to making Justin's Congregational Life Coordinator position a long-term role, and we'll excitedly welcome Meghan Garvey as a ministerial intern in August.

If this year has been marked by One Big Thing, it's growth. We've grown programming to meet increased energy and enthusiasm. We've seen Sunday attendance go up by about 20 people on average from last year, including more families with young children. Consequently, we've grown in multigenerational outreach efforts and programming. We've grown membership by about 12.5%, and all of that change and openness is nourishing spiritual growth.

As I said in the annual report that you *definitely* read, I'm so glad and grateful to serve as your minister this year. I couldn't have imagined the spirit of love and belonging you radiate as a congregation, and I'm so looking forward to another year together!

With care,
Rev. Eileen ❖



Movie Night Fun and Fundraiser for PRIDE

A Message from
Rev. Michelle Yates

On Friday, June 12 we will be having a Movie Night at church showing Disney's "controversial" film "Strange World." "Controversial" because one of the main characters is a youth who is queer. It is visually stunning, explores the complexities of multigenerational family dynamics and the interdependence of all life.

We will provide food (pizza, salad, vegan soup, and bread) though you are welcome to bring something to share.

There will be fancy mocktails for sale, and we are accepting freewill donations. All funds raised will go toward our outreach at the Rochester Pride Event on Saturday, July 18.

Food will be served at 5:30pm, and we will start the movie at 6pm.

Please bring anything to help you be comfortable: your own chair, a blanket, pillow, etc.

Coloring, beading and other craft supplies will be on hand.

Let's embrace queer solidarity, build community and raise funds to reach out to welcome and affirm all those who attend PRIDE this year!

See you there!
Yours in the Journey,
Rev. Michelle ❖





The Emerging Leader Award: *Rev. Eileen!*

Submitted by Elizabeth Osta

In May, Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell won the 2026 Emerging Leader Award from Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School. The award “celebrates alumni/ae within the past decade whose ministry demonstrates exceptional dedication and promise in church and society.” Rev. Eileen was a 2017 graduate of CRCDS, and she was nominated by another alumna, church member Rev. Peggy Meeker.

Rev. Eileen was praised for her leadership, which reflects her strong commitment to inclusive worship, LGBTQ+ advocacy, and youth ministry, and for her innovative approach to congregational vitality.

Fellow alumnus Rev. Richard Gilbert and his wife Joyce, Board President Michael Scott, and church members Elizabeth Osta and Dave VanArsdale attended the celebration dinner on May 14, along with Eileen’s husband Brian and Rev. Shari Quan. Rev. Eileen’s heartfelt acceptance remarks as she received the award spoke of her love of Rochester and her hope for the future. ❖

A Tribute to Our Treasurer, Dick Shroyer

Submitted by Ann Rhody

On June 30 of this year, Dick Shroyer will retire as Treasurer of First Universalist. He has held this critical volunteer position for over 10 years, and he has had a profound and positive impact on the financial life of the church during his tenure!

Dick and his wife, Leslie, joined the church back in the early '80's. The Shroyers held a number of volunteer positions in the church, especially when their children were young. After Dick retired, he agreed to take on the position of church Treasurer in early 2016.

A detail-oriented person with great tech skills, Dick established most of the systems we use in our church finance practices today, including “paperless office” procedures. He modernized our operations and record-keeping to ensure that we could easily access data for budget development, reporting, and other functions. Dick is a spreadsheet wizard! No matter the finance task, discussion, or dilemma, he was able to create a spreadsheet to move us forward.

While Dick and Leslie don’t attend Sunday services often, they have remained supportive church members throughout the years. Dick has held volunteer positions with other community organizations, and both he and Leslie enjoy traveling.

We are forever grateful for your service, Dick. Your positive impact will be felt for years to come! ❖

May New Member Sunday

Submitted by Justin Wilson, Cong. Life Coordinator



First Universalist was thrilled to welcome new members (left to right) Aaron Fountain, Jr., Alex Stone, Mary Stone, Rowan Stone, Zepplynn Riverstone, Cara Gagliano (with Roman & Johara), Kay Cahill, and (not pictured) Kayleigh Stampfler to our congregation! ❖

Drop-In Discussion

Submitted by John Lukes

Drop-in discussions are held on Tuesdays from 6:30-7:30pm via Zoom, and in-person on the first Sunday of the month in the Chalice Room at 9:15am. Phil Ebersole is the contact for in-person discussions. Look on uuroc.org/drop-in-discussions for the link!

Sunday, June 7 | Ancient History Mysteries

In-person

Scientists are discovering that ancient history is older and more complicated than anyone thought. As we consider what comes next for human civilization, it may be helpful to expand our thinking. Hank Stone will lead the discussion.

June 2 | *Where Is Liberalism & Where Is It Heading?*

What makes a liberal? Have liberal voices changed and how? Am I a far-left liberal, a centrist liberal, or right-wing without even knowing? Let's seek better understanding. Bill Elwell will present.

June 9 | *Eternal Life? Who Wants It, Who Needs It?!*

Over millennia, our ancestors developed various ideas about the existence of life after death, including a variety of ideas about the possibility of 'Eternal Life'. While some of these ideas offer reassurance and hope, others have been known to generate fear, foreboding, and a compounding fear of death. Let's discuss our thoughts and feelings about the concepts of 'Eternal Life'. John Lukes will moderate.

June 16 | *Surprise Guest Sermon*

Tonight we'll watch and discuss a sermon which I've picked and shared with permission, but it's a surprise. John Lukes will moderate.

June 23 | *Open Topic Session with Rev. Eileen*

Rev. Eileen would like us to ask whatever questions we've got at the end of the church year about the state of the congregation, plans for the upcoming year, and what we're dreaming of doing in the future.

June 30 | *Christian Zionism*

In the USA, there are an estimated 30 million Christian Zionists, more than the total number of Jews in the world, who believe God wants the land of Israel to be a Jewish homeland. Who are they? Why do they believe this? What is their impact? Phil Ebersole will make a presentation and facilitate a discussion.

Have a topic for us? Contact our team with your proposal at DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org. ❖



Membership Committee

Submitted by Donna Anderson, Chair

It's been a wonderful year! So much positive energy in our church community.

I asked Susan Keefe to share her journey with us. Susan has become a regular volunteer at coffee hour and organizing refreshments at memorial services. She truly cares about our church community.

"Why I Began Attending and What I've Found."

I started coming to First Universalist Church of Rochester after hearing our then-minister speak at an interfaith Thanksgiving service. The message stayed with me and led me to visit in January 2020. I was looking for a place where thoughtful discussion was encouraged and where people were brought together by shared values rather than rigid doctrine.

From my first visit, I felt genuinely welcomed in a way I hadn't experienced before. That feeling, along with the meaningful sermons, kept me coming back. When COVID hit and services moved to Zoom, that sense of connection didn't go away.

Over time, I got more involved. I started volunteering for coffee hour once a month and still do. I also help fill in for MJ when needed. More recently, I became co-chair of the Caring Committee with Heather Jones, which has been especially meaningful. Working with others to support people during difficult times reflects what this community is all about. I'm grateful to have found a church where I feel connected, supported, and able to give back."

Sue Keefe, April 2026

Membership Committee meets every third Thursday from 11am-1pm at church. Let us know your thoughts and concerns! ❖



Social Justice Plate: *R Community Bikes Inc.*

Submitted by Emma Barry

Our June Social Justice Plate Offering is designated for *R Community Bikes, Inc.* and will be collected on Sunday, June 21.

R Community Bikes is a 501(c)(3) charitable corporation organized to collect, repair, and distribute bicycles, and to offer bike education, free of charge, to children and adults in Rochester, New York, improving lives one bike at a time. They give away over 2,000 bicycles, and complete over 3,000 repairs, every year, for their clients, many of whom depend on bicycles as their main source of transportation. In addition, they supply bicycles or repair services to dozens of community organizations, including church groups, youth centers, and neighborhood associations.

Please contribute to support this important work. For more info, visit rcommunitybikes.net. ❖

Clothing Donations Wanted!

Submitted by Justin Wilson, Cong. Life Coordinator

On Friday, July 17, we will be hosting a Gender Affirming Clothing Swap! To prepare for this event, we are seeking donations of clothes.

Place donations of clean, new, or gently used clothing in the labeled bins in the Clara Barton Lounge between now and the event date.

Please only donate garments that have been laundered and are still wearable (no stains, holes, etc.). Participants attending the free event will be able to try on and take home clothes that affirm their identity. ❖



Finance

Submitted by Brian Mumey, Chair

There's a very important meeting with a very important purpose happening soon. The meeting is the **Annual Congregational Meeting**, scheduled for June 7, and the purpose, among others, is to review and vote on the fiscal year 2026-2027 budget. The Finance Committee has been working hard to prepare a budget which meets the needs of our growing church while planning for its financial health for years to come. Please plan to be there.

If you are unable to attend the Annual Meeting or if you wish to see the budget prior to the meeting, email finance@uuroc.org and I will send you a link.

We're happy to announce that Venmo is now a payment option on the church's donation page. When you use the donation QR code or link, either payment service (PayPal or Venmo) can be selected.

And speaking of donations, don't forget that your monthly pledge can be automatically debited from your checking account. No need to hassle with a check. For more info, email finance@uuroc.org.

The Finance Committee is always looking for knowledgeable people to be a part of the committee. If you have experience in accounting, fundraising, etc., we would love to have you join us. The committee usually meets quarterly with an extra meeting in spring to work on the budget. Please email finance@uuroc.org if you are interested.

This will be my last *Outlook* article as Chair of the Finance Committee. On June 30 our esteemed Treasurer, Dick Shroyer, is retiring after serving 10 years in that position (see the article about Dick on page 3). And on July 1, I will move into that role. Luckily for me, Dick will still be around to provide advice and guidance as I step into his very big shoes. Thanks, Dick, for your time and dedication to the financial wellbeing of First Universalist.

And as I move into the Treasurer position, Jim Milch will become the Finance Committee Chair. Jim, thank you for taking on this very important role. The Finance Committee is in very good hands.

Have questions about the info above or other church financial matters? Email finance@uuroc.org! ❖



Queer Corner: *Pride!*

Submitted by Tom Williams

It's been 25 years since the first time I marched in the Rochester Pride Parade with First Universalist in 2001. I was new to the congregation and I had only been selectively "out" of the closet. I marched with a former UURoc member, it was also his first time marching. There were only five people from the church marching, so my friend and I decided we would carry the church banner. We lined up on Argyle Street off of Park Ave. When it was our time to fall into place and start marching with the parade, we rounded the corner onto Park Avenue.

That was when we saw the hordes of people lined along the sides of Park Ave; other gay people, family members, and allies cheering us on. My friend looked at me and as I looked at him he said, "What were we thinking?" Neither of us had ever been this "out". It was awesome to feel all the support from the community, many shouting, "Here come the UU's", since our faith had marched from the very first parade. While I was scared to death, it was also one of the most exciting days of my life, and so much fun.

On the downside, as we passed through the intersection of East Avenue and Goodman Street, we were verbally attacked by religious fanatics. They shouted vulgar things at us through megaphones, quoted Bible verses, and degraded us. It was shocking to me to witness so much hate.

On July 18, next month, will be my 25th Pride Parade. So, what differences have I seen over the past 25 years?

The parade has moved to South Avenue and marches from Science Parkway north to Highland Park. The hordes of cheering supporters still show up. It's still a blast and so much fun.

However, UU's are no longer one of the only faiths represented, there are many Christian churches and

Jewish temples now flying rainbow flags and marching with us, a sign that LGBTQ+ people are being more widely accepted. An entire generation of youth has been born and grown into young adults.

This generation no longer needs to hide their true identities. They are proud of who they are as sexual beings, and are living openly and authentically. For that we can all be proud. The religious fanatics have pretty much given up. Their numbers are few and far between, and there is no more degrading shouting from bullhorns. We won!

This year as I march for the 25th time with people from the three Rochester-area UU Churches, I will be proud to have been a part of the history of bringing focus to a cause that is so personal to me and the entire LGBTQ+ community.

Please think about joining us on July 18 for a fun walk down South Ave.

With Pride, Tom Williams ❖



Coffee Hour Team News

Submitted by MJ Curry

There will be no coffee hour June 21, day of the church picnic. Instead, the coffee hour team will meet after service to discuss how things are going.

We are always looking for more volunteers to help host coffee hour to keep having teams of three, and to reduce how often volunteers serve. If you are in choir, you can volunteer to be the third person to help with clean up. Training and all supplies are provided (unless you are Angelina Bell). ❖

Spotlight on Committees & Groups: *Committee on Ministry*

Submitted by Tom Williams, Chair

In our UU community, so much of the heart and hands-on work happens behind the scenes — in our committees. That's why the Communications Committee is presenting *Spotlight on Committees & Groups*, a regular newsletter feature that celebrates the people and purpose behind these vital teams.

Each month, we'll lift up one committee's (or group's) mission, share what they're working on, and highlight ways you can get involved. Whether you're passionate about justice, music, spiritual exploration, care and connection, or the logistics that keep us running smoothly — there's a place for your gifts. Whether you're new to our congregation or have been here for years, we hope *Spotlight on Committees & Groups* will inspire you to get involved in a new way.

We hope this series will deepen your understanding of how we live our UU values through shared leadership and collaborative service — and maybe even spark your curiosity to join in!

Let's build beloved community, together.

Current Chair & Members: Tom Williams (Chair), Melissa Parrish, Theo Munson and Kitty Forbush

Your Group/Committee's mission or purpose: Meet with and assist the minister in Church Ministry decisions; act as a sounding board for conflict within the congregation; write/review policies; present new policy to the board for approval; educate the congregation on policy; assist in performance appraisal of minister and their ministry.

One big/special project your Committee/Group has been working on lately: Rewriting/revising the Policy on Conflict within the Congregation

Are you looking for new members? No

Are members voted on by the congregation or do they volunteer? Voted on by the congregation

How often do you meet? Monthly, or as needed in crisis or conflict arises

How do you meet? By Zoom.

Are there any special qualifications/talents required to serve? A desire to serve the congregation. ❖



Church Picnic—June 21!

Submitted by Clinton Swingle

Preparing and sharing a meal, exchanging stories, hearing children laughing while playing games in the sun and open air, feeling a soft breeze blowing, and sharing your favorite family recipe—these build community. You *mustard* heard I love picnics so much. *Lettuce* enjoy a beautiful day and *ketchup* with friends. Please join us for the annual church picnic at the Eagle Shelter at Seneca Park on Sunday, June 21, at 1pm. Bring a dish to pass and meat to grill if you want meat. The church will supply drinks, place settings, and some extra food. There will be enough food. If you need a ride, email membership_com@uuroc.org with a way to contact you. ❖





EcoJustice: Climate Justice Series, Part 2— Be With Children

Submitted by *Juanita Ball*

Bring Climate Action to things you like to do:

- Take the kids to an animal sanctuary instead of a zoo.
- Take them to maple syrup and apple cider making days. Also take them to “Pick your own” days at local farms.
- Visit shopping at area farm markets.
- Encourage them to try meals that are plant-based and use less salt and sugar. Substitute fresh fruit for sugary/salty snacks. Have them make and eat a melon ball salad with no salad dressing.
- Get age-appropriate library books on climate change. Read together and then have talks about how they may be personally affected and what they can do in response.
- When possible, compare the taste of freshly picked food to that grown far away, like a NYS apple to a Washington State apple.

What, why, and how these suggestions help:

- Farm visits show children what animals look like when they are alive. How many of them have seen a live cow, pig or chicken? For older children, consider introducing them to the concept of CAFO’s, Concentrated Animal Food Operations.
- Maple syrup sap and apples need specific temperature ranges in order to flow or grow. These ranges are becoming erratic.
- Foods grown to be transported are often picked before they are fully ripe, affecting nutrient production.
- Transporting food long distances uses fuel.

The next meeting of the EcoJustice Group has been rescheduled for June 14, at noon, in the Chalice Room. All are welcome! ❖



Follensby Pilgrimage: A UU Experience at Follensby Pond

Submitted by *Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell*

In 2025 the Nature Conservancy created an easement protecting a 9,000-acre section around Follensby Pond as a freshwater research preserve, guided by a public-private consortium, to collaborate on research and preserve the lake’s unique ecosystem. While making Follensby a living laboratory, it also provides for Indigenous access and managed public access aimed at education. We are so grateful to the Nature Conservancy for collaborating with us to offer this program.

UU adults and youth over 12 are invited to join with other Unitarian Universalists for four days and three nights staying at a beautiful large home on Tupper Lake. Our time together will weave opportunities for hiking, paddling, or quiet reflection, sharing delicious meals, learning some of the history of this place, stories from Indigenous voices, and a day at Follensby Pond, viewing shores rarely seen by other humans.

Most importantly, you will share this extraordinary experience with other UU’s, worshipping together, making new friends, and sharing your reflections and insights.

You can get more info or reach out to reserve a spot at uuschenectady.org/follensby-pilgrimage-august-2026. ❖



ROC JUNETEENTH JAZZ

BLACK MUSIC MONTH

June 7th 2026

1 - 6 pm

Highland Bowl

**HERB SMITH & THE
FREEDOM TRIO
JIMMIE HIGHSMITH JR.
MJ EASLEY**



**CHELSE CHAMBERS
SERENA YOUNG
RYAN JOHNSON & THE
ROC CITY ALLSTARS**



**FEATURING
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www.eventbrite.com



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**THE FAITH LEADERS
ROUNDTABLE**

spiritus christi





Please join us for the 10th anniversary **Roc 6.19 5K Run/Walk** on Friday, June 19, 2026 at Noon at Genesee Valley Park, Riverbend Shelter. A virtual option will also be available. Register for either option at itsyourrace.com.

Join us later for an evening of jazz at The Hochstein School (50 N. Plymouth Ave) featuring the legendary bass player Ron Carter and Foursight beginning at 6pm. Donations benefit the construction of the Franklin D. Florence Civil Rights Heritage Site at Baden Park and ROCmusic kids.

We look forward to celebrating with you!

NO ONE IS FREE UNLESS WE ARE ALL FREE!



Jazz Tickets:





Save the Date!
Registration Open!



New York State Convention of Universalists

2026 Annual Meeting

at the

UU Weekend at Silver Bay

October 9-11, 2026

Registration is open NOW!

Visit nyscu.org for registration form and information

UU Weekend at Silver Bay is a gathering of over 200 UU's, on the shores of Lake George. In addition to the NYSCU Business meeting, the weekend features workshops, music, activities, and meals, with opportunities for relaxation and fellowship. For more information on the weekend, click here: <https://albanyuu.org/blog/uu-silver-bay-weekend/>



The NYSCU Board of Trustees has approved a subsidy of \$300 toward registration for those who serve as delegates from a NYSCU member congregation and attend the annual meeting in person.

To check for your congregation's NYSCU membership status, use this link:

<http://localhost/About Us/joining.shtml>



First Universalist
Church of Rochester

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 in the Jewish and Christian traditions.

Minister | Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell

Minister of Lifespan Faith Dev. |
Rev. Michelle Yates

Music Director | Dr. Brock Tjosvold

Office Manager | Mx. Emma Barry

Cong. Life Coordinator | Justin Wilson

Nursery Care Provider | Carol Williams

Worship begins at 10:30am on Sundays

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More info is available on our website: uuroc.org

The usual deadline for all submissions to *Our Outlook* is the 15th of each month.