



Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

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First Universalist
Church of Rochester

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Sunday Services | January 2025

January 5 | *Let's Talk About Gender, Baby*

We need to have some conversations about gender in our congregations, our families, even within our own hearts. Even when it might seem, in times like these, that these conversations are frivolous or unnecessary, they are more important than ever. So let's talk about it: what even is gender? And why does it matter?

— *Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell*

January 12 | *The Emptiness of Masculinity*

In conversations about unpacking “toxic masculinity,” the question of what “healthy masculinity” is inevitably comes up. Is there a definable essence of masculinity that can be drawn on as a positive source for men and those in the masculine gradients of the gender spectrum? And what might the search for this essence teach us about gender, identity, and reality?

— *Rev. AJ VanTime*

January 19 | *Representation is Not Equity*

A service on visual representation as well as interpersonal representation, and why having friends who are different from you does not create equity. From the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we are called to take action to create equity in this community, in our city, and in the world.

— *Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell*

January 26 | *God is Trans*

Whether we call ourselves atheists, Jesus-lovers, Buddhists, or simply Unitarian Universalists, how we talk about gods matters. The ways we seek, understand, and describe the sacred is shaped by and in turn shapes our relationships and broader worldview. If God isn't a bearded white man in the sky, what is she?

— *Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan*

❖ **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. ❖



Collaboration, Collaboration, Collaboration!

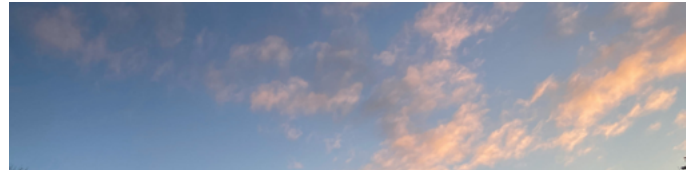
*A Message from
Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell*

I am writing to you all following a weekend where First Universalist joined with First Unitarian and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Canandaigua to hold our first ever public Naming Ceremony for transgender and gender non-conforming folks. We helped nine people get signatures notarized for their paperwork, had five organizations present for a Queer Resource Fair, and named around 20 people during the ceremony. Not a dry eye in the house. People were requesting that our congregations do this annually.

In this month of January, First Universalist will be joining with our sibling congregations for a three-congregation pulpit swap to address aspects of tyranny and gender. It feels fitting that all of our congregations get to join in listening to different voices. It is a way for your ministers to get to try on new worship practices, for congregations to welcome different perspectives into the pulpit, and for our churches to continue to be in relationship with one another. I hope you will show up in support.

The theme for the months of January and February is Equity—one of Unitarian Universalism’s six core values. As we focus on Equity, our three congregations will be joining in a Big Gay Wedding on Saturday, January 11 from 10am through 2pm. First Universalist is hosting! Please take a look at more information in the pages of this newsletter. In these times when we are anticipating the start of a new (yet familiar) Presidency of our country, when many people are in fear—it is good to know our congregations can be a safe harbor and resource to our community.

In Faith and Courage,
Rev. Lane-Mairead ❖



On Optimizing Kindness

Submitted by Madi Russell, Congregational Life Coord.

On my first day at First Universalist, I couldn’t keep my hands from shaking. Will they like me? I wondered, Am I intruding? Or do I belong? These are the same questions that many first-time visitors ask themselves as they enter our sanctuary. Some tuck themselves away in the back row, and others simply stand frozen in the doorway like a deer in headlights. They soon find, just as I did, that they have nothing to worry about.

If I had to describe our congregation in a single word, it would be welcoming. Visitors are greeted with handshakes and invitations to coffee hour, and are often sent home with at least one hug. Our dedication to hospitality and warmth is one of First Universalist’s greatest strengths. As Congregational Life Coordinator, my job is to take the love at the core of this church and light it up like a beacon: a flaming chalice so bright that all the city can see it.

So...how the heck do we optimize kindness?

There is already great progress being made. Our Membership Committee, myself included, are continuing our training with the UUA. We’ve also been brainstorming ways to track visitor attendance and congregational growth, as well as ways to get new visitors better connected to our congregation. One way we hope to get members and visitors more involved is to expand our team of ushers and greeters. Discussions about an usher training class are underway to prepare our team for an influx of holiday visitors. Stay tuned for more information! Connecting Circles are also beginning to come together, and I encourage inviting our visitors to join!

There’s so much to look forward to in 2025. The Beautification Team plans to breathe new life into our gorgeous building to make it all the more welcoming. Our Big Gay Wedding on January 11 will solidify our position as one of Rochester’s affirming churches. Our Membership Committee will continue to train with the UUA and share our findings with you. I look forward to working with you all this coming year, and growing together! ❖

HFA: The Giving Season

Submitted by Chris DeGolyer

In November and December, we asked for gifts, and wow, did you deliver!

In November, you overflowed the collection box in the Clara Barton Lounge with socks, boots, hats, gloves, jackets, and other winter clothing for unhoused folks. These will go to the REACH shelter program, PCHO (Person-Centered Housing Options), and H.O.T. (Homeless Outreach Team) to give to unhoused folks on the streets of Rochester.



In December, you gave more than a carload of beautifully wrapped and labeled presents, all tailored to the wish list of a family of nine, a guest family of FPGROC (Family Promise of Greater Rochester). This photo shows some of the gifts and givers. Thanks everybody, and Happy New Year! ❖



Connecting Circles: Sign Up!

Submitted by Rev. Michelle Yates

Connecting Circles are one of the most effective ways to help people feel deeply connected in community. It is a time to reflect on our values and spiritual questions, to engage in the search for truth and meaning, to laugh and get to know each other. Short-term, interchanging groups, give us a chance to connect with more people sooner rather than later.

Please complete a survey to tell us when you are available and how you prefer to meet. You can find it on our website or on one of the tall tables in the Clara Barton lounge.

Folks will be matched up in groups of 6-8 people that commit to meet for 6-8 sessions. Training will be offered so that groups can facilitate themselves, but support will always be available. Reach out to Rev. Michelle with questions at edu@uuroc.org. ❖

Donation Request: Healthy Snacks & Hospitality Bags

Submitted by Rev. Michelle Yates

Our UUROC kids are excited to help assemble bags to be shared with our houseless neighbors and others in need. Please help us by donating any of the following items. There is a collection box in the Clara Barton Lounge under the Housing for All table. Send questions to edu@uuroc.org. ❖

- Juice boxes/pouches
- Granola bars
- Snack sized gummies
- Sandwich cracker packs
- Apple sauce pouches
- 1 oz./Small hand sanitizer
- Chapstick
- Small (1 oz.) lotion
- Travel toothbrushes
- Mini toothpaste
- Small tissue pack

Drop-In Discussion

Submitted by John Lukes

Drop-in discussions are held Tuesday evenings from 6:30-7:30pm via the church Zoom account, and in-person on the first Sunday of each month in the Chalice Room at 9:15am. Phil Ebersole is the contact for in-person discussions. Contact DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org for the link, or look on uuroc.org!

Sunday, Jan. 5 | Reasons for Hope? *In-Person*

Folklore reminds us that it is darkest before the dawn. Given the climate challenges, the refugee crisis, the border crisis, the DEI challenges, and threats to liberal democracy, do we have reason for hope? Is there good news out there? Bill Elwell will lead a discussion of these questions. We meet at 9:15am the first Sunday of each month through June 2025 in the upstairs Chalice Room. All are welcome!

January 7 | Church Life After Death, AKA Planning for Your Legacy

You support this congregation with your time, talent, and treasure, but wouldn't it be great if that support could continue after your death? The First Universalist Legacy Giving Team, led by Ann Rhody, will introduce some of the ways to include the church in your estate plan—and why now is a good time to start thinking about it!

January 14 | Preparing to Celebrate the Words and Actions of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Join in a discussion about the importance of celebrating this leader without using his quotes and words in the service of empire, injustice, or whitewashing. Rev. Lane-Mairead will share some quotes and sentiments from King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" as well as some works from the late Rev. Kimberly Hampton about not preaching the "Palatable King".

January 21 | Has this really happened?!

How are we all doing now that it's really happened? Let's gather and share our reactions and thoughts after the inauguration. Steve Munson will lead our discussion.

January 28 | Open Topic

Let's have another Open Topic nite which are usually both fun and engaging. John Lukes will moderate our discussion.

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



Free Books!

Submitted by Marcy Klein, for the Library Committee

Please help the Library Committee by taking any books you want from the large freestanding bookcase in the library. On the side facing the Clara Barton Lounge, you'll find brand new books about Unitarian Universalism, and used books about UU and other religions. On the back of the bookcase are a wide range of used books, both fiction and nonfiction. You can ignore any price stickers, and take as many as you would like, for yourselves, to give away, or put in a Little Free Library. The Library Committee hopes to empty the bookcase before the Auction on February 2, so the bookcase can be removed and more space opened up for seating in the area.

Note that the books in the built-in bookcases along the walls are our permanent library collection and are not included in this offer. Members or longtime visitors can borrow any book in the collection for four weeks. If the library is not staffed, refer to the instructions taped to the library desk; they explain the process for checking out and returning a book. ❖



EcoJustice News

Submitted by Sarah Singal

The EcoJustice Group will meet on Sunday, January 5 at noon in the Chalice Room. How would you like to celebrate Earth Day, 2025? Everyone is welcome. There will be no meeting in February. ❖



Save our Garden Committee!

Submitted by Sarah Singal

Our Community Garden will end if no one steps up to lead it. The Garden Committee, part of the House Committee, has been aging out and our remaining members are limited. If you would like to discuss the future of our gardens contact Sarah Singal or Ed Deller. All options are open! ❖



2025 Service Auction: February 2!

Submitted by Ann Rhody

Groundhog Day: It's a BIG deal this year. Why? Because it's ALSO the day of our Annual Service Auction! We'll gather after the service to bid on events, services, and items donated by members of the church, raising funds to support our church's operations. Save the date, and plan to attend!

The 2025 Service Auction will have something for everyone, including:

- No-cost door prize drawings
- Items in every bidding range
- Fun, food, and entertainment
- Real time presence for our online community!

Key Dates:

January 1: The online donation form is active! Donate your event, service or item using the form at uuroc.org.

January 21: Deadline for donations

January 26: Catalogue of items available

February 1: Deadline to submit proxy forms

February 2: The BIG DAY!!

We need YOU!

We have many volunteer opportunities in the following areas:

- Set up
- Proxy team
- Tally/clerk help
- Lunch (bringing food, set up, and clean up!)
- Tech support

To volunteer, ask questions, or get more information about the Service Auction, contact Ann Rhody at auktion@uuroc.org. ❖

Eastman at Washington Square Concerts

Concerts are held at our church at midday on Thursdays. Each concert begins at 12:15pm and ends at approximately 12:45pm. Admission is free!

• Jan. 9 | Jazz at Noon

Join Eastman jazz faculty Bob Sneider, guitar, & company for a fabulous laid-back lunch hour.

• Jan. 16 | Paris is for Flutists

Come and enjoy French music performed by flutist, Sophia Gibbs Kim, and pianist, Irina Lupines.

• Jan. 23 | "H & G, a Great and Terrible Story"

Eastman Opera Theatre is excited to feature a preview of an opera by A. Shawn/Hong & Randich that offers abstract reinterpretation of Grimm's fairy tale, *Hansel and Gretel*.

• Jan. 30 | Evidence of Things Not Seen: Songs of Ned Roren

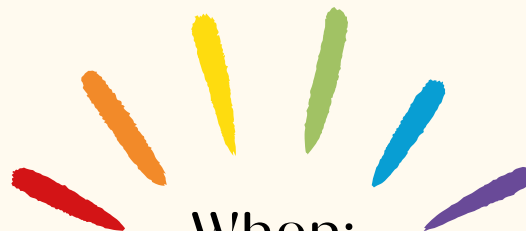
Come hear songs of Ned Roren with lyrics drawn from the works of various poets presented by Eastman Opera Theatre. ❖

SAVE THE
DATE

Big Gay WEDDING!

WEDDING CEREMONIES FREE OF CHARGE!

Presented by First Universalist,
First Unitarian, & the Unitarian
Universalist Church of Canandaigua



When:
January 11, 2025
Time 10am-2pm!

Location:
First Universalist Church
150 S. Clinton Ave,
Rochester NY, 14604



NEW YEAR
NEW HOPE

WORK
HARD

2025 Resolution

STAY
FOCUSED

Strive for
progress



This year I will...

Places to visit:

Send happy mail to:

- _____
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New hobbies to try:

Foods to try:

Good deeds to do:

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Declutter:

Habits to break:

Exercise:

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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. Lane-Mairead Campbell

Minister of Lifespan Faith Dev. |
Rev. Michelle Yates

Music Director | Dr. Brock Tjosvold

Office Manager | Mx. Emma Barry

Finance Admin | Maresa Carmody

Cong. Life Coordinator | Madi Russell

Nursery Care Providers |
Carol Williams & Lily Thatcher

Worship begins at 10:30am on Sundays

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Clinton Swingle (*Pres.*), Heather Jones (*Vice-Pres.*)
Jim Milch (*Clerk*), Shelley Adams, Bridget Watts,
Howard Spindler, & Michael Scott

Editor, monthly newsletter, *Our Outlook*, & *This Week at First Universalist* (digital): Emma Barry

More info is available on our website: uuroc.org

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