

Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY

August 2016

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Our Outlook

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Sunday Services | August 2016

August 7 | *Compassionate Accountability*

Promising to be “Tough on Crime” has been a winning strategy for both Democrats and Republicans in recent years. But as Unitarian Universalists, we are called to look beyond such promises, to the human beings who suffer because of them.

-Peter House (Summer minister)



August 14 | *Orangeade for the Tourists*

Sometimes what the world asks of us is at odds with what we feel is our job. At these times, we need to stretch ourselves. In this re-working of one of my early sermons, I will explore what happens when we can go beyond ourselves, and meet the needs of others.

-Peter House (Summer minister)



August 21 | *Heart Land: Where Faiths Connect - General Assembly 2016*

From June 22 – 26 of this year, Unitarian Universalists gathered in Columbus, Ohio for the 55th annual General Assembly of the UUA. Suzie Gutierrez and Bob Remley, our congregational delegates to the Assembly, share their personal reflections, experiences and recommendations for our congregation based on major themes arising from GA, including love, multiculturalism and outreach.



August 28 | *The Price we Pay for Being Informed*

This Sunday, we will explore how too much media connectedness can damage our spirits, rob our souls, and deplete us of the vital energy we need to work for change.

-Peter House (Summer minister)



September 4 | *Tier One Thinking*

On this Labor Day weekend, we will explore the downside of always looking out for “number one”.

-Peter House (Summer minister)

Summer service begins at 10am





Minister's Message

Message from Peter House

I have written and spoken before about the value of “news fasts” and spending time “unplugged”. Perhaps I have overused this theme in the past few years, but, I have been reaping so much benefit from this practice in my own life, and the news has been so disturbing and over stimulating in recent weeks, that I have chosen to revisit this idea once again.

There is a difference between keeping up with the news, and dwelling on it. And keeping up without dwelling helps us keep events in perspective and, assists us in maintaining a measure of peace in our souls. Spending thirty minutes or so every twenty four hours keeping up with the headlines is a good practice. As engaged and justice minded citizens, we have a responsibility to keep abreast of what is happening in the world.

Spending three hours voyeuristically consuming detail after tragic detail about violent or disturbing events, does not perform a service to the world, it robs us of any sense of inner peace or calm, and it warps our perspective. We become preoccupied with fear, and immobilized by despair.

Contrary to what we so often hear, and may even repeat ourselves, we do not live in scary times- at least not

scariest than any other times. Violence and unrest have always been with us. No doubt many people who lived through the Great Depression, the Holocaust, or the 1960s believed that they were living in the scariest times of unprecedented evil. But spending too much time immersed in the details of police shootings, terrorist cells, and Republican convention speeches can make one believe that the current time is worse than any in history.

Take heart. It is not. It is instead a time, like all times, of injustice, inequality and imperfection. And like the days of yore, these circumstances breed resentment, anger, and fear, which sometimes erupt into violence. It has always been so. It has never been different.

So keep informed, take action, and show concern. But don't let the images consume you, don't allow fear to overtake you, and don't give in to despair. The forces of good are as strong as ever, the nature of humanity is as compassionate as ever, and the universe is as safe as it has always been. Engage intelligently, purposefully, and discerningly in the work of the world but keep your perspective by simultaneously nurturing your soul, cultivating peace, and seeking beauty and goodness. Your peaceful heart, your creative energy, and your optimistic spirit are precious commodities, well worth your vigilant safeguarding. They will not only sustain you, they will also save the world.

And a peaceful heart is essential element of a well-rounded person. And to engage intelligently, purposefully, and discerningly in the work of the world, one must be well-rounded. -Peter ❖

Adult Faith Development Offering

From Age-ing to Sage-ing: Elderhood and Spirituality:

So you're getting older. What does that mean? How does that change things? Based on the *New Vision of Growing Older* by Zalman Schachter-Shalomi & Ronald Miller, this 3-session workshop/discussion group will reflect on our personal experiences of aging, look at models of aging from various cultures, and revision of our framework for aging and creating meaning in our later lives.

This workshop will be offered twice at two different libraries and is open to the public. Invite your friends, but please rsvp to Michelle, our Director of Life Span Faith Development at edu@uuroc.org with which library program you will attend. Community members can also rsvp to the libraries directly.

• **Arnett Branch Library-** 310 Arnett Boulevard
Mondays, Sept. 12th, 19th, & 26th from 1:30 – 3:30pm

• **Irondequoit Public Library-** 1290 Titus Ave
Thursdays, Sept. 15th, 22nd, & 29th from 1:30 – 3pm

While not required, participants may be interested in reading *From Age-Ing to Sage-Ing : A Profound New Vision of Growing Older* by Schachter-Shalomi, & Miller, which can be found in Monroe County Library system. ❖



Walking Together:

Director of Life Span Faith Development

Submitted by Michelle Yates, DRE

Summer is the perfect time for adventure! The perfect time to get out and explore! To experience the world and your relationships anew!

In this season, I am reminded of Sophia Lyon Fahs (August 2, 1876 – April 14, 1978), the “great grandmother” of liberal religious education. She was a revolutionary thinker who began the shift of religious education from catechism and class, to an experiential workshop model. Her thinking was that to talk about the sacred one must first have an immediate experience of the sacred.

Here is a great bit of wisdom from Sophia, “We are resolved to protect individual freedom of belief. This freedom must include the child as well as the parent. The freedom for which we stand is not freedom of belief as we please,... not freedom to evade responsibility, ...but freedom to be honest in speech and action, freedom to respect one’s own integrity of thought and feeling, freedom to question, to investigate, to try, to understand life and the universe in which life abounds, freedom to search anywhere and everywhere to find the meaning of Being, freedom to experiment with new ways of living that seem better than the old.” - Sophia Lyon Fahs
In your summer adventures, remember to use your religious freedom to seek out experiences of the sacred, and to search “anywhere and everywhere to find the meaning of Being.”

Enjoy!
~Michelle ❖



Finance article

Submitted by Anne Rhody

A Banner Year for Our Church!

Our church’s fiscal year ended on June 30 with a very large operating budget surplus: just over 10% of the total budget. How did we come by such a “windfall?” As a result of our growth, income categories including pledges, plate offerings, contributions, and fundraising all exceeded budgeted amounts. In addition, a year ago (when the 2015–16 budget was passed), we didn’t expect to have any significant parking income as we had only one spot rented. As it turned out, a number of spots were rented out this fall and this brought in a few thousand dollars more than expected.

On the expense side, several of our larger categories—most notably, heat—ran under budget. A mild winter, plus some savings on utilities and other expenses, contributed to the surplus.

So what do we do with that extra money?

The finance team, with the Board’s approval, decided to help solidify the church’s financial stability and to boost funding for some current needs.

We were able to:

- Pay an additional \$12,000 toward a loan we took from the endowment in 2007
- Add \$1,000 each to Membership and Music Discretionary funds, partially to offset the cost of additional hymnals in the sanctuary
- Add \$1,000 to the Board’s Discretionary fund, with the intent of increasing participation in leadership training
- Add \$1,000 to the Social Action Discretionary Fund for upcoming projects
- Add \$5,000 to the Building Reserve Fund, to assist with smaller building renovations and improvements

It is satisfying to know that every single dollar of the surplus will help us to fulfill our mission to “nurture the spirit and serve the community.” Thank you, all, for generously supporting your church’s mission!

Ann Rhody for the Finance team ❖

Where Are They now?

Submitted by Marti Eggers



Part 2 – It's About the Children

“RAIHN didn't break my children's spirit,” said “Sandra,” a former RAIHN guest at a coordinators' meeting a few months ago. She had come to the meeting with her children and two other Moms and their children to talk to the coordinators about their experiences before, during and after RAIHN.

Sandra's comment made us wonder what had happened to her young children in the homeless shelter she had come from. We could see what was happening at this meeting, though. Her youngest had happily leapt into my lap for a hug and a long snuggle. His older sister ran over to two other coordinators to play. The oldest boy ran into the room and gave big, warm hugs to all the coordinators he knew. We were friends from a week or a month or two months back. The children felt safe and loved. Yes, we hosted Sandra and her lovely family this past year.

Sandra and her family have moved into their own place and are very happy. Sandra worries, though, that her children might now expect dessert every night with cookies on the side! (More on this later.)

RAIHN, the *Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network*, was established 15 years ago to provide safe shelter for families who are temporarily homeless, allowing families to stay together in a time of crisis. Powered by amazing volunteers, the RAIHN program gives families the time and space they so desperately need in order to mend their lives and return to sustainable independence. ❖

Progress Report from the Social Justice Task Force

Submitted by Eric Van Dusen, Connie Valk, Richard Gilbert

At the Annual Meeting the Congregation approved a committee of three – Eric Van Dusen, Connie Valk, and Dick Gilbert – to recommend one or two Social Justice initiatives that would generate a variety of projects that could involve many, if not all, congregation members, and serve real needs in the community. The Committee is thinking of this task as its Social Justice Redesign Summer Camp.

The *Committee of Three* has been hard at work. So far, the three happy campers have

- Created a mission/vision that is being scrutinized by the Board;
- Made a list of leaders in the community to interview, with a strict timeline for completion;
- Discussed ways to make certain that the congregation and minister are involved in the decision-making (think focus groups, emails, etc.);
- Developed questions and a format for the above.

Know that we realize that Social Justice is a critical part of what makes First Universalist Church what it is today. When the schedule of focus groups is announced, we encourage you to participate (choose just one, as we want give each person equal time). For those who cannot attend the focus groups, there will be an electronic option to offer your feedback. ❖

Earth Justice

Submitted by Sarah Singal

There will be a table devoted to planet sustainability after Sunday services August 14. Stop by and talk to other interested people and let us know your level of interest and what actions you think we should pursue. ❖

Auld Lang Syne

Submitted by Karen Dau, archivist



THIS PHOTO on the east side of the church was taken on Sept. 14, 1926. Here we see a section of Cortland St., which was located between Broad St. and Woodbury Blvd. Cortland Street was removed probably during the early 1960's, to make way for the construction of Xerox Tower later in that decade, partly on land formerly occupied by that street. At its semi-annual meeting on Oct 3, 1982, the congregation voted

to approve the sale of our half-section of this former street to the Pioneer Development Corporation. Later the company constructed a skyway over the space that connected to Xerox across the street. On May 29, 1987 a groundbreaking ceremony was held for the new skyway. The church received \$22,000 from for the purchase of its air rights. ❖

Book Club News



Submitted by Shirley Bond

Just a reminder that the Book Club is taking a summer break and will return **September 25th**.

The Soul of an Octopus by Sy Montgomery was suggested by Ruth Fitzgerald... a surprising exploration into the wonder of consciousness.

We meet in the second floor discussion room at 12 noon.

Have a wonderful summer.

Any questions please see or email

Shirley Bond at Bondshirl1@gmail.com or

Sarah Singal at ssingal@Rochester.rr.com ❖

Living Our Values, Making A Difference

Submitted by Newcomb Losh, Communications Committee

Tom Ruganis, chair of our House Committee, detangled the garden hose during Spring Clean-up Day on May 7. At least 16 people pitched in to spiff up our building and grounds.



Ginger Sykes prepared garden planters.



Janet Clarke-Hazlett dusted the pews and found dozens of little pencils.

Bill Jones prepared to relocate shelving in the boiler room.



Ed Deller made sure all of our smoke detectors were in working order.

Have an action photo or two of our members and friends being inclusive, living our values or making a difference? Send them to Newcomb Losh at jnewcomb.losh@yahoo.com.



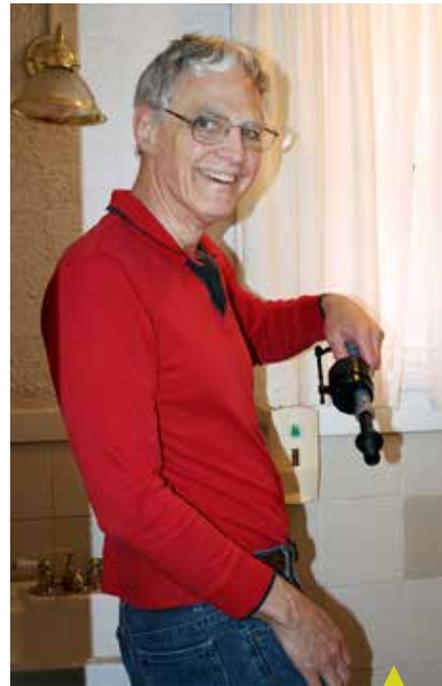
Katherine Flynn unearthed garden tools from the boiler room.



Ruth Fitzgerald and **Eileen Fernandez** (at rt) had fun while scrubbing the stoves.



Michael Scott did electrical work on the Court Street lights.



Jim Milch replaced a toilet valve.



Phyllis Bentley was one of several who prepared our community garden beds

All photographs by Newcomb Losh unless otherwise noted.



Long-time member **Jan Hickman** dusted the library.



UUnAMOR member **Beth Ares** (top-right) massages a former veal calf during the group's field trip to Farm Sanctuary in Watkins Glen, NY on June 24. The 175 acre sanctuary houses 500 animals and birds rescued from a variety of abusive situations. UUnAMOR (Unitarian Universalist Animal Ministries of Rochester) is a First Universalist Church task force headed by Lois Baum. UUnAMOR members at Farm Sanctuary (above, left to right): **Carol Williams, Tom Williams, Beth Ares, Lois Baum, Greg Baum.**



Eyes closed. Members of the Beginning Meditation class met for a practice session in our sanctuary on May 18. L to r: **Kathy Russell** (co-leader), **Donna Anderson, Katherine Flynn, Moritz Wagner** (co-leader), **Joy Leccese, Margaret Gallagher.**

Garden Update

Submitted by Sarah Singal

Weather on July 3 was perfect for our first ever after church summer garden refreshments. Iced tea, iced lemonade and iced water tasted summery and cool. We mingled happily and admired a verdant group of growing veggies. If you missed it, there will be another on August 7, weather permitting.

The early crops have been kale, swiss chard, radishes, snow peas and green beans. Following soon we await tomatoes, jalapeños, zucchini and cucumbers, and more zucchini. We offer the day's harvest to passersby. Come and pick some for yourselves, and maybe you have someone in mind who would appreciate some super-fresh produce. Did you hear that we have an abundance of zucchini flowers? Will each transform into a zucchini?



Here's a zucchini recipe from Connie: Cut crosswise in 1/4" slices, baste with oil (such as Wegmans basting oil). Grill, turning once, until tender. Totally yummy. ❖

Drop-In Discussion Schedule, August 2016

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

Drop-in discussions are held at 9:15 a.m. (except during the summer) each Sunday 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.

Currently drop-in discussions begin at 11:15 a.m.

August 7 | *Third Party Voting*

Phil Ebersole will discuss his reasons why a vote for a third party - Green, Libertarian or Constitution - is not a wasted vote.

August 14 | *Personal Safety Nets*

Kate Fleury will lead a discussion on developing your personal support system ahead of time for when you will need help, and on being a member of a support group for others.

August 21 | *Environmental Chemicals*

What does it mean to be "Green"? Kevin Adams and Shelley Adams will lead a discussion on how we live with the presence of environmental chemicals, and whether we can do anything to change it?

August 28 | *Evictions and Poverty*

Matthew Desmond's *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in an American City*, tells about how slum landlords rent unliveable apartments to desperate people, and then make huge profits off them for various bogus penalties. Shirley Bond will review the book and share her eye-opening observations of the Rochester Landlord Tenant Court, where she spent time after reading the book.

September 4 | *Open Forum Discussion*

We'll meet and talk without a topic set in advance.

Drop-in discussions will resume at 9:15 a.m. after Labor Day.

September 11 | *Social Justice Focus Group*

Details to follow.

If you wish to have a topic discussed or, better still, are willing to lead a discussion, speak to Phil Ebersole. ❖

House News-Aug. 2016

Submitted by Tom Ruganis

A lot has been going on so keep an eye out for changes that will be occurring in late July and August:

- The plaster work in the sanctuary will be started during the last week of July. The stairwell in the RE wing is already underway as this is being written. The work is being done by the same company that has done a lot of repairs on our Church in past years. We were fortunate that his schedule opened up to allow completion this summer.
- The new church signs are scheduled to be installed in late July. Thanks to the effort of all who made these improvements possible, especially Marcy Klein and Sarah Singal!
- The refinishing of the office floors is still scheduled for August 15th. We will remove all furniture from both the Volunteer and Church offices on Sunday August 14th in preparation for work to start Monday at 8am. We apologize in advance for the disruption.
- The spreader used for salt in the winter has been repaired at no cost! The manufacturer was contacted and they provided free replacement parts. Their wonderful customer service is greatly appreciated.

As always, if you are interested in the above or have any other repair or project you would like to see completed, or would like to take on, or join the House Committee, please let anyone on the committee know.

The Committee is currently: Tom Ruganis, Chair (tom@ruganis.net), Sarah Singal, Karen Dau, Marcy Klein, Mike VanArsdale, Michael Scott and Ed Deller. We would love to hear from you! ❖

Library Will be Open August 14



Submitted by Philip Ebersole

Although the church library and bookstore are normally closed during the summer, they will be open for browsing, borrowing and buying on during coffee hour on Sunday, August 14. Shirley Bond will be librarian. The library and bookstore will resume their every-Sunday schedule on September 11. ❖

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 10:00am Sundays

Summer Minister | Peter House

Director of Life Span Faith Development | Michelle Yates

Music Director | Carol Xiong

Sexton | Brandon Fagan

Nursery Care Provider | Carol Williams

Office Administrator | Melissa Davies

Office hours, Monday – Friday, 9:30–2:30. Telephone 585.546.2826

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Editor, *This Week at First Universalist* (digital): Melissa Davies; Monthly newsletter *Our Outlook*, David Damico. Church photo on cover by Tom Ruganis.

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