

# Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

June 2014

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## Sunday Services | June 2014

### June 1 | *Living a Passionate Life*

The Wellin Family sermon purchased at the Service Auction. Where does your passion lie? How does it feed, uphold, help, and hold you?

— Rev. Martha Munson

### June 8 | *The “Free Church” is NOT Free*

So what does it cost, what might it cost you? Is it worth it? A service for the Annual Meeting Day.

— Rev. Martha Munson

***The Annual Meeting for First Universalist will be held June 8 immediately following the service. Key agenda items will include approval of the 2014-2015 annual budget and election of church leaders.***

### June 15 | *In Praise of Men*

On Father's Day it seems a good time to examine the role of men in our culture. Father Knows Best? Archie Bunker? You? Your dad? There will be a bridging ceremony for Brendan Courtsal in today's service as he transitions out of high school.

— Rev. Martha Munson

### June 22 | *I Bid You Remember*

A service for all ages about memory and hope, the last of this regular church year. We will ritually close out this interim time, with the return of your pulpit, in safekeeping, for your next minister.

— Rev. Martha Munson, Lori Staubitz and friends

***Church picnic to follow, see page 6 for details.***

### June 29 | *TBA*

***[Service begins at 10 am—first day of summer schedule.]***

— Summer Minister, Peter House



Our regular morning service as well as Religious Education classes begin at 10:30 am. Summer services will begin at 10 am starting June 29.



## Walking With You

Message from the Interim Minister

“And the days dwindle down to a precious few.” Ah yes, oh no!

In a recent service I talked about Moses, leading the Israelites through the desert and the wilderness for 40(!) years. They whine, they rebel, they complain. I used Frederick Buechner and his *Beyond Words*, to do a “midrash” on Moses (often portrayed in the movies like Charlton Heston; probably looked a lot more like Tevye the Milkman). Buechner says something like, for reasons not entirely clear, when they reach the top of Mt. Pisgah, God tells Moses that he will not enter the promised land with the people. They must go on without him. And he dies there in his 120th year, having seen the promised land but not being able to go there. And then I opined about First Universalist and me wandering together, and that I have seen your “promised land.” It is indeed a bright and promising future. But/And I will “die” on Mt. Pisgah, and you will go to your promised land without me.

But first we have “good goodbyes” to do. Let’s be sure to do them. Let’s talk, have tea, lunch, or....

It will be “goodbye” soon enough. Let’s do it well.

Faithfully,  
*Martha* ❖



## Our Newest Members

— Nancy Gaede, Membership

Please join us in welcoming our newest church members:

- Patricia and John Adams
- Kathy Russell
- Norma and Jim Sittnick ❖



## Gleanings

— Rev. Lori Staubitz

These past two years of service with you have been full of exploration as we sought new ways of being and doing Religious Education, now formally known as Faith Development. It has been a time of transition, as partnerships between lay leaders and professional RE staff and Team leadership were strengthened. Adult Faith Formation became the central focus for professional staff time and the Children’s Sunday Morning Program shifted to a comprehensive all-ages Children’s Worship service with related themes to Messages For All Ages and Adult Worship. Our Nursery Staff Coordinator Carol Williams took on volunteer coordination for Nursery volunteers and Sunday mornings ran smoothly.

I am so grateful to all who joined me in this effort. You know who you are and you have my heartfelt thanks! It is easy to underestimate the power of even small efforts in moving toward greater good.

In closing, I would like to share this article with you from Barbara Brown Taylor, “What’s New?”, *The Christian Century*, May 30, 2006:

*“There is always tragedy somewhere, as the news reminds us so well. But there is not always tragedy everywhere, which the news does not make quite so clear. The good news is that where ferries are going down, brave people are diving into water to lift thrashing children to safety. Where crops are failing, generous people are providing relief for farmers and migrant workers, and where a child disappears, an entire community is turning out to hunt clues, post flyers, cook food and keep watch with the family.*

*Meanwhile, there are entire towns where nothing terrible is happening, where parents are caring for children with remarkable tenderness, where nurses are tending patients, mail carriers are delivering packages, and at least one person is taking off work early to coach a youth soccer team. Terrible things will continue to happen, which the best efforts of people will not be sufficient to prevent, but bursts of gratuitous kindness are the mustard seeds from which healing bushes sometimes grow. They constitute the alternate reality that I want to live in, even if it means limiting my exposure to other kinds of news.*

*Continued on page 3*

## Gleanings (cont'd)

When I resist the economy and despair of the dominant world in which I live, I resist from a minority viewpoint that I learned in church. In that alternate reality, which operates on the divine economy, human beings are worth more than what they can buy or sell, and suffering breaks open as many hearts as it breaks down. There are many kinds of evangelism, I know, but here is one I can embrace: in a culture of fear, addicted to the bad news of sin and death, to keep telling stories of human kindness and divine grace—without commercials of any kind. In a world like ours, the church may be the only corporate sponsor that can afford to deliver such good news for free.”

Our journey together has led us to fill our tool boxes with a greater means for creating good. “Appreciative Inquiry”, “Right Relations”, “Permaculture Training”, “The Source of Human Good” and “Spirituality” were all designed to help you continue to form an identity as a people of faith... one that really matters! And “matter” you do!

As I leave you, I want you to know how much you have touched my life as you have shared your faith journey with me. Yours is an important ministry and I look forward to hearing about your continued success! As I depart, I carry you in my heart,

With love and thanks, Lori ❖

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## Connie Valk to Receive Faith in Action Award

— Elizabeth Osta

Connie Valk will be awarded the Faith in Action Award at the June 10th annual dinner of the GRCC annual Faith in Action dinner at Burgundy Basin Inn.

Whether its washing dishes, doing childcare, getting tenants for the parking lot, or finding a new minister, Connie Valk of First Universalist Church is up to the task. She has served in so many capacities, even she loses track of all she's done and continues to do. If you meet her, be prepared to make a donation to the capital campaign. She's co-chairing that as well. Connie also has a passion for the plight of migrant workers as well as being an advocate for children. You've guessed it! There's not much she doesn't care about and work for. We are proud to salute her for her Faith in Action.

For more information on the dinner, please visit <http://www.grcc-fian.org/>. ❖

## Enter, Rejoice, and Come In!!



This is the song heartily sung by our congregation as Rev. Celie Katovich was welcomed into the sanctuary after our unanimous vote to call her as our settled minister. A joyful day, indeed!

Rewind to a few years ago, when we first welcomed Rev. Munson to our pulpit. Although we had many strengths, we were weary, worried, and uncertain. Together, we set upon a path of transition work with Martha as our guide, the Transition Team as facilitators and monitors, and YOU, the congregation, as the people who actually made it real.

Robert Burns wrote, “*Oh would some power the gift give us, to see ourselves as others see us.*” Rev. Munson gave us that gift—indeed, a powerful gift. She helped us see our potential. To see missed opportunities for growth and outreach. Helped us to consider what might be keeping us from what we could be. She freely gave her love. Her experience. Her wisdom. She helped us to change, in some large ways, but mostly small ones.

We ARE UU's Downtown Gem, and like every gem, it must be polished and cleaned from time to time in order to get it to fully sparkle. How wonderful it has been to see this work come to fruition! And now it is indeed time to celebrate. Please plan to attend the all-church picnic on Sunday, June 22, after the service (find details on page 6 or on the church website). We'll have a rousing celebration of thanks for Rev. Martha Munson and all she has meant to our present success, joy, and strength. And although sad, we will bid her farewell as we continue on our respective journeys.

Thank you, Rev. Munson, and thank YOU, the congregation for your openness, willingness, and participation during these two years of active transition work. It has been our honor to serve as your Transition Team!

*Ann Rhody for the Transition Team*

*Karl Abbott, Chair; Bill Elwell, Mary Louise Gerek* ❖

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## Book Club

— Shirley Bond



The Book Club will meet June 15th at 12:15 pm. The discussion will be based on the book “Empire Falls” by Richard Russo. Any questions? Contact Shirley Bond, [Bondshirl@yahoo.com](mailto:Bondshirl@yahoo.com), or Sarah Singal. ❖

# News from the Board

— Ed Deller, President, Board of Trustees

One of the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees is to adopt new policies where there are gaps. Two policies were approved over the past few months to address gaps for a Committee on Ministry and a Communications Team.

## Committee on Ministry

- The role of the Committee on Ministry (COM) is to encourage the minister, lay leaders, and the congregation at large to work together for the best possible fulfillment of the congregation's mission and covenant. In this role the COM will serve the entire congregation.
- The COM will serve as the "eyes and ears" on the health of the congregation and as a confidential and impartial conflict manager for congregational issues. Additionally this committee will conduct annual appraisals of the congregation and the minister.
- The committee will comprise four church members and the minister (ex-officio). The members are to be elected by the congregation at the annual meeting.

## Communications Policy and Committee

- First Universalist communicates in many ways. A policy was developed based on UUA inputs as well as other organizational experiences to set guiding principles for digital communications as well as more traditional means.
- The role of the Communications Team is to provide a centralized point for coordination and guidance of both internal and external communications for First Universalist consistent with the Communications Policy set by the Board of Trustees.
- The Communications Team will develop procedures consistent with the Communications policy. The Minister, *Outlook* Editor, and Web/Office Manager will all be closely linked to this team.
- Building on her experience with Ministerial Search, Lisa Gwinner has agreed to chair the Communications Team and will form the group over the summer. The Board is grateful to Lisa for taking on this important role.

The Board is working to make these policies readily available to church members. In the meantime, please see a board member for additional information.

There are also some changes in the Personnel committee. Becky Elwell is stepping down as chair after many years of dedicated leadership. Janet Rothbeind has been a member of the Personnel committee and has stepped in to take the chair position. We thank both Becky and Janet for the capable support they provide. ❖

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## PACT Capital Campaign Update

— Ed Deller and Connie Valk, PACT Major Gifts Co-chairs

The major gifts phase of the PACT (Preserving A Cultural Treasure) capital campaign is in full swing to support the new roof and exterior renovations project. We are pleased to announce that we now have more than \$300,000 in pledged contributions, including the \$100,000 1:2 match from Dick Brush, towards our \$400,000 goal. Look for the PACT stickers on the nametags of PACT supporters to date.

Based on this result, the funding criteria from the March 16 congregational meeting have been met and the Board will proceed with the project without need for a further congregational vote. We will provide an update at the annual meeting.

We feel blessed to be part of such a generous congregation. ❖

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## UUA General Assembly

— Ed Deller

Every year in late June, delegates from more than 1,000 Unitarian Universalist Association congregations meet for five days to worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through the democratic process.

This year's General Assembly will take place June 25—29 in Providence, Rhode Island. First Universalist is entitled to three delegates for GA. If you are interested in being a delegate, please contact our nominating committee chair, Tom Williams, at [busterdawg\\_1947@yahoo.com](mailto:busterdawg_1947@yahoo.com) before June 9. For more information about GA, visit their web site at <http://www.uua.org/ga/>. ❖

# A Finance Flurry!!

— Ann Rhody, Finance Chair

There has indeed been a flurry of activity in finance for the second half of the church year. The service auction, Stewardship, budget development, and capital campaign have kept all of us busy! We also managed financial issues after the office theft this winter, rearranged our budget categories to reflect the change in our operations, and completed the closure of our accounts with Bank of America. All of this was done with a “skeleton crew” of finance people, and we were all spread thin as most of the finance team members juggle other church volunteer positions and responsibilities as well. Still, it’s been a successful year, and the future is bright!

More information about this year will be contained in the Finance Committee annual report, and the budget presentation at the annual meeting on June 8.

Looking ahead to next year, your finance team would love some company! You don’t have to be a finance whiz, either. Much of our work involves planning—of fundraisers, stewardship drive, and other finance matters. The team works throughout the year, but formal meetings only occur 3 to 4 times. If you are curious or think this might be a good fit for you, we’d welcome you to sit in on our next meeting and learn more! Please contact finance chair Ann Rhody at [annrhody@yahoo.com](mailto:annrhody@yahoo.com) and we’ll let you know when we are meeting.

This congregation remains profoundly generous and appreciative. It’s a pleasure to do finance work on your behalf! ❖

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## Our Greeters

— Nancy Gaede, Membership

It is wonderful to come to a church and be so warmly welcomed upon entering. Each week, congregation members help out with this important task.

We would like to thank our recent greeters:

- Karl Abbott
- Dwight Montague
- Lyle Jenks
- John Morgan
- Beverly Lynn
- Jim and Norma Sittnick
- Paula Marchese
- Carol and Marty Vyverberg

Our thanks to all who have supported this effort during the current church year. Didn’t get a chance to do so? We’ll catch you next year. ❖

# House Report for June

— Tom Ruganis

## Clean-Up Day

A big THANK YOU to all those who came and made our Spring Cleanup day a success! Virtually all of the planned tasks as well as a few more were completed.

## Window Repairs

The repairs to the stained glass window in the Clara Barton lounge are progressing. The contractor has now procured all the needed material and is in the process of building a replacement window. The new window should be installed within a few weeks.

## Exterior Renovation

The Exterior Renovation project will start in late July and is expected to be completed by early October. The church parking lot will not be available for use during this time.

## Heating System

Because of our cool spring it was decided to leave the steam turned on a bit longer to accommodate the RAIHN guests. Repairs to the three (minor) leaks in the steam heating system will be completed as soon as the steam is turned off and the system cools sufficiently. ❖

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## Summer 2014: Calling All Musicians!!!

— Ann Rhody



Have you always thought of singing a solo at church? Want a chance to play that clarinet piece or show off your harmonica skills? This may be your big opportunity!!

Our summer service schedule will start on Sunday, June 29.

We have many talented musicians who play hymns and/or provide special music during the summer. Are you one of them? Even if you have just one piece you’ve always wanted to try to perform, we’ll make a time and place for you to do it, whatever your voice or instrument. Please contact the summer music coordinator, Ann Rhody, at [annrhody@yahoo.com](mailto:annrhody@yahoo.com) for a schedule or more information. ❖

# Please Join Us for the Annual Picnic!

— Janet Rothbeind

**Date:** June 22

**Where:** Durand Eastman Park, Acorn Shelter

**Time:** Karl assures us that the fire will be ready at 1:00 pm

**Directions:** *From the west*, North on St. Paul Blvd to right on Lake Shore Drive, continue to the Park, turn right (south) on Log Cabin Rd. Acorn is the first shelter on the right.

*From the east*, take 104 over the Bay Bridge to Culver Road, north on Culver Road, turn left on Sweet Fern Road (turns into Lake Shore), left on Log Cabin Road, Acorn is first shelter on the right.

**Bring:** Dish to pass (not dessert), something to grill & rolls, your drink

**We will provide:** Place settings, plates, cups, silverware, and napkins, aluminum foil to cook on, dessert

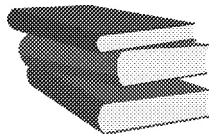
**Remember:** The afternoon will provide a celebration of Martha Munson's time with us. This will be our chance to thank her for steering us through some very rough waters.

See you there! ❖

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## Library News

— Keith Stott



How often have you been blessed by the feeling that we are all one and that anyone—anywhere—who is severely disadvantaged deserves our help?

No Greater Love: The James Reeb Story is the inspiring biography of a Unitarian minister (All Souls Church in Washington D.C.) who with Martin Luther King Jr. marched for desegregation and voting rights in Selma, Alabama in March of 1965 and was called a “nigger” and clubbed to death by a white man. News of his death circled around the country and the world and sparked much outrage and inspired increased civil rights campaigning. The book's title comes from the Bible: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:15).

For me this book gives deeper, richer meaning to our Affirmation of Faith. James Reeb's life has made the world a better place. **Call number is 921 R.** ❖

# Thank You, RAIHN\* Volunteers

— Sarah Singal



By the time this newsletter is out, our RAIHN rotation will be over or almost over. It takes many willing volunteers to produce a host week, and we would like to thank each and every one of you, from those who bring out the inflatable beds to those who launder the bedding when it is all over, with many dinners, evening activities, sleep overs, and breakfasts in between. Making it all work for our guests and for each other is one way this church nurtures the spirit and serves the community.

*\*RAIHN, the Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network, is a consortium of 14 faith communities that host families in temporary need of housing, and 31 faith communities that provide volunteers and other support to the host congregations. First Universalist is a host congregation, supported by St. Mary's, Aldersgate United Methodist Church of Greece and the Church of Love Faith Center. Four times a year, for a week each time, volunteers work together to provide a welcoming, safe place for the families to come home to after a day at the RAIHN Center where they get help looking for housing and, for some, new employment.* ❖

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## What's in the Garden?

— Sarah Singal

Although we would love to say that food will be overflowing in our Lots of Food garden, we need to make way for roof work this summer, and cannot push ahead with our plans. But we are taking this down time to plant nitrogen fixers, clover and comfrey, so look for the familiar clover leaves and also for larger long and slender leaves of comfrey; these plants will provide natural fertilizer. A ubiquitous weed called Lamb's Wool is another nitrogen fixer and we do not remove this; it can be eaten like spinach. When weeding, the drill is “pull and drop”, allowing plant nutrients to be reused.

In the meantime, last year's strawberry plants with a long berry-producing season are blooming, and some of our chives are blooming, too. In addition, there are three new cherry tomato plants. So come by and take a look, help out with watering, and help cover the beds with tarps while the roofing is done. For questions contact Sarah Singal (ssingal@rochester.rr.com).

The new garden is a joint venture with Lots of Food and First Universalist Church. Our Lots of Food contact and advisor is Rev. Lori Staubitz. To see other garden sites in the Lots of Food program, visit [www.lotsoffood.org](http://www.lotsoffood.org). ❖

# Auld Lang Syne

— Karen Dau, *archivist*

On December 6, 1908, the *Democrat and Chronicle* related this dramatic account of how our church organ had been subject to massive vandalism three days earlier.

An accurate knowledge of the art of organ building combined itself with pure dastardliness in the mental makeup of the men or women who invaded the new church of the First Universalist Society Saturday night, October 3rd, and did his or their best to ruin the new Hope-Jones organ that the Society has installed. Fortunately the designer of the organ, with a corps of skilled workmen, was available for instant service, and the damage has been repaired so that the opening recital on the new instrument can be given tonight by Edwin H. LeMare.

The miscreant who tried so hard to disable the organ removed at least 100 pipes from their proper places and bruised them so badly that they were utterly unfit for being replaced. Men employed in tuning the organ knocked off for supper Saturday night at 6 o'clock. On their return the work of the vandal was patent, for he had been disturbed in his work, and had left one of the pipes near the main manual. Every stop in the organ was put out of commission by the removal of the pipes. Mr. Hope-Jones who invented and perfected the instrument is at work at the church, and will have all the pipes replaced before Mr. LeMare takes his seat for tonight's recital.

It is difficult for us of this day to understand how anyone could have been guilty of such wanton destruction. We gain some insight into the reason, however, when we learn that Robert Hope-Jones completely revolutionized organ building by his many inventions, and it has always been suspected that the persons who mutilated our organ were directly connected with some one in the organ business who recognized the upheaval which the inventions of this English genius would cause in the construction of pipe organs. This was not the only experience of a similar nature which Hope-Jones had. In another organ installed by him the main electric cables were cut, necessitating the complete rewiring of the organ, while in still another instance a spike was driven through the main cable to short-circuit the wires. Thus does the old established order, whether in music, industry, or politics, seek to thwart progress!

We heard of another interesting bit of history in connection with our organ this past week. It seems that one of

the principal stockholders in the Hope-Jones Organ Company was Samuel Clemens, better known by his pen-name of Mark Twain. When our organ was about completed Clemens came to Rochester to hear it...

From a remark dropped by one person there may be others of the opinion that the music of the organ issues from the sixty-two gold colored pipes visible above the console. In reality these pipes are merely decorative. The music comes through the spaces between them from some twelve hundred pipes in the organ chamber behind the choir loft wall. Only one who has been in the organ chamber can realize the intricate mechanism and numberless parts installed there. ❖

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## Drop-In Discussion Schedule – June 2014

— David Damico

Drop-in discussions are held 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. We meet at 9:15 am during the regular church year.

### June 1 | *Open Topic*

### June 8 | *Personal Hobbies/Show and Tell*

We all have hobbies. Be prepared to talk about and perhaps demonstrate your hobby. Share your favorite hobby story if you like. Facilitated by Harvey Rothbeind.

### June 15 | *TBA*

### June 22 | *(Last week of regular church schedule) TBA*

***We'll meet at 11:15 a.m. during our summer schedule, which begins June 29.***

### June 29 | *Our Place In the Animal World*

A continuation of the Fall 2013 *UU World* article by Kimberly Finch. In the article, she states that "Unitarian Universalism can help us sort out our place in the animal world—how we find joy in other animals..." Join David Damico as he facilitates a continued discussion on this article. It is available online at <<http://www.uuworld.org/spirit/articles/289456.shtml>>.

*Topics are subject to change.* ❖

## **First Universalist Church**

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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 10:30 am 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, 8:30 am–2:45 pm. Telephone 585.546.2826*

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