



Our Outlook

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First Universalist
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Sunday Services | October 2020

October 4 | *Healing in the Middle*

Sometimes, when hurt or harm has no clear end in sight, we have no choice but to start healing in the middle of it. How do we heal while we're still going through something? How do we do the work of caring for our hearts while harm is still happening?

— *Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell*

October 11 | *Making Room for the Unspoken Grief*

So much has been lost in the way life is lived, in the way humans connect, in the ways we can be present to one another's sickness and pain. Have you made time to process the more low-level griefs? This service will explore what grief looks like beyond the death of a loved one, expanding our awareness and our hearts.

— *Rev. Lane Campbell*

October 18 | *When Neighbors Are Dying*

Injustices in the world often lead to the deaths of those who are marginalized at catastrophic rates. It can feel difficult to open the heart to so much loss. And yet, our humanity depends on it.

— *Rev. Lane Campbell*

October 25 | *What We Carry Forward*

With those we have lost from our days, there are always pieces of their life and living that stick with us. What have you learned from you ancestors?

— *Rev. Lane Campbell*

❖ **Service begins at 10:30 am** ❖

*Worship will be meeting online into the foreseeable future. Please join us—
Internet link: <https://zoom.us/j/131764422>; Phone number: 646 558 8656 with
Meeting ID: Meeting ID: 131 764 422. ❖*

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What Do You Say?

Message from Rev. Lane Campbell

What do you say about grief when it is everywhere? When it has become our way of life? I'm not just talking about missing those we love who have gone from our days, though that is an important aspect of grieving. I am also talking about grief over the loss of being able to meet as a congregation in-person. Or grief over a trip you were set to take. Or grief over a hope for the future of our country. Or even grief over not being able to see a friend in-person. We are grieving all of the time now. And even experiencing some anticipatory grief.

Anticipatory grief is the emotional process we experience leading up to a situation where we anticipate loss. One of the pieces I have heard from you all is anticipatory grief about the winter months, how hard it will be having to stop gathering outside together, how hard it could be to endure this pandemic and physical distancing when the sky is grey. This is just one major example. I imagine you can think of a few from your own life. What do you say about grief when it is everywhere?

So often, grief is something we do not speak about. It's hard to talk about in polite company. Grief gets to the core of us and can be an extremely vulnerable part of our lives. And yet, it is so much of our lives right now. Who are you sharing your grief with? How are you sharing your grief out? It has the potential to make us sick, if we keep it solely inside. It has the potential to come out sideways if we attempt to deny it. It has the potential to create deeper relationships when we share it with another.

So, what do you say about grief when it is everywhere? You accept that it's there, and pay attention to where you are in it. You share it with a trusted friend or relation. You remember that grief is not forever, even though it is right now—grief shifts over time. Mostly, you acknowledge that grief is everywhere. ❖



Walking Together: Thoughts on Grief

Message from Rev. Michelle Yates

It feels like there is so much to grieve since this past March: jobs, loved ones, ways of life, friends, school, celebrations, hobbies, hope. So much to grieve and no time to process it, as day comes after day, and new losses arise to be overcome or just survived.

Often it is my impulse to look toward hope, an alternative, or a way to fix the problem. But we each need time to grieve. To sit in the sorrow and honor the loss; to brew the pot of "Tear Soup" from our story on Water Communion Sunday. Only then can we open our hearts to what might come next.

In the past, church members have expressed an interest in a grief group particularly for those who have lost a loved one, but now everything we do is a grief group of sorts. Grief for the world, for our country, for our community, for our children, for our elders...

This month we get to embrace the theme of grief in all the ways it whispers to, shapes, and shakes us. From small unrecognized grief to grief that is shared with the multitudes.

My invitation to you is to feel into that grief that does not make headlines but is weighting on YOUR heart. Perhaps it is an old grief that keeps coming to visit, one that is hard to express, or feels like it would be insignificant to others in this time. It is still there. It is still real.

Consider writing it down, drawing a picture, or other way to express and share it. You can do it just for yourself, you can share it with Rev. Lane and me, or you can look for ways to process it in our worship or programs in the month of October.

You are not alone. In our sharing and in our witnessing, we are building beloved community. ❖

Yours in the journey, Rev. Michelle Yates
Director of Life Span Faith Development

Finance Update

Submitted by Ann Rhody, Finance Chair

In the midst of dealing with Covid, protests, roof and window repair, medic training, and more...the world of church finance might not seem to be in the forefront. But it's important, especially this year, for us to check in and let you know how the church is doing financially!

The fiscal year is still “young,” having started on July 1. But already, we can see trends:

- Plate income is running well below even our lowered expectations. After all, if we aren't physically IN church, we aren't dropping those bills into the basket each Sunday.
- Pledge income is coming in a bit more slowly than last year
- Parking fees and building use income are low.

Sounds like mostly bad news? Not so fast, because....

- Building and office expenses are running well below projections. We don't have to do extensive copying or buy office supplies, for example.
- Most church programs which require some supplies — like childcare, faith development, or choir — are barely touching the allotted budgeted amounts.
- We expect utility bills to run below projections, considering that we will be virtual until at least January.
- What about all of the water and supplies to support the needs of protesters? Those are not having an impact on our budget, as they have all been donated!

When we embarked upon the fiscal year, we had to be ready for anything...and we ARE ready to weather the financial ups and downs this year is already bringing. We have money to pay our bills and our staff, our endowment remains strong, and so far we are “in the black” for the fiscal year. Who could ask for more?

Actually, we do want to ask you to do these things:

- If you are in the financial position to do so, please continue to pay pledges by mailing

checks to the church. We can also accept pledge payments online (uuroc.org), but the church pays fees for this service.

- If you would normally drop some money into the plate each Sunday, consider making a donation for plate collection, either by mail or online.
- Whether making a payment online or by check, please include a memo note (check), or select from the menu (online) to let our collector know whether you are paying a pledge, making a plate offering, or other donation.

One final note; we are awaiting the application process for loan forgiveness for the PPP (payroll protection program) loan we received as part of the CARES act. As soon as the application process is opened, we'll compile the documentation and hope to have the entire \$15,000 forgiven, further strengthening our ability to weather any financial storms that should arise.

Thank you all for your continued support!

Ann Rhody for the Finance committee

finance@uuroc.org ✦

Small Group Ministry Openings:

New Opportunities for Connection

Submitted by Rev. Michelle Yates

Small Group Ministry is designed to foster connection and caring, spiritual growth and development, and to strengthen the fabric of our church community by exploring various topics.

Participants commit to attending a series of six sessions. Sometimes, individuals continue with the same group for longer periods of time. Each group is led by a trained facilitator and at this time meets either via Zoom online or in a socially distanced way outside.

Interested in joining a Small Group Ministry this fall? Take a look at the description on our website uuroc.org under the “connect” tab and complete the “interest survey”, or email SGM@uuroc.org! ✦

Drop-In Discussion Schedule

Submitted by Beth Ares

Current drop-in discussions are held each Tuesday evening from 6:30 to 7:30pm via the church Zoom account. Contact DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org for the Zoom link!

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 the discussions.

Check our website for more details as these dates approach!

October Drop-In-Discussion dates:

- October 6
- October 13
- October 20
- October 27

Do you have a topic for us? Contact our team members with your Drop-In Discussion proposals: dropindiscussion@uuroc.org. ❖

Extended Midweek Meditation on the Second Wednesday of the Month

Submitted by Rev. Michelle Yates

On the second Wednesday of the month, our Midweek Meditation will include a longer guided meditation and time for sharing after our traditional format. We expect the full running time to be from 11:30am-12:30pm. This extended time will try to honor the needs and interests formerly met by our Saturday Mindfulness and Meditation sessions. Feel free to bring your lunch. ❖

Path to Membership Session

Submitted by Connie Valk



If you are interested in becoming a member of First Universalist Church, or are a frequent visitor who isn't yet sure of joining, but want to find out more about our church and its many facets, join our virtual Path to Membership two-hour session on October 17 at 9:30am.

You must RSVP to Rev. Lane at minister@uuroc.org so you can be sent the Zoom link to participate. As some information will be screen-shared, it is best to participate via computer rather than by phone.

After the session, if you decide to join, an appointment will be made to have you safely sign the Membership Book. ❖

LOVE WITH NO EXCEPTIONS
250 YEARS OF UNIVERSALISM
September 30, 1770 - the moment when Love caught Fire



Murray Grove Celebration

Submitted by Dick Gilbert

On September 30, 1770, John Murray preached an historic sermon on Universalism. To celebrate the coming of a Universalist "founder" to these shores, Murray Grove Conference Center is hosting a virtual Sestercentennial Weekend October 2-4.

As this is an historic Universalist Church, you might want to participate. Go to murraygrove.org/250th-anniversary/ for more information, including how to register. Joyce and Dick Gilbert are honorary co-chairs of this event.

If you have questions, please contact Dick at rsgilbert@uuma.org or 585-738-8229. ❖

EcoJustice News

Read With Us

Submitted by Sarah Singal for the EcoJustice Committee

The EcoJustice Group had tentatively decided on a theme for this church year of food and food-related issues. And then Juanita Ball, who relies on her daughter's computer and cannot Zoom with the group, sent us this email:

"I agree with food as a theme only if we work with it on a national and global level. I have read *On Fire, a burning case for the Green New Deal* by Naomi Klein. I recommend it to the group.

Scientists calculate that if we don't slow down/stop the increase in CO2 levels within ten years, we will have reached the point-of-no-return, and although the Earth will survive, most living creatures on it will face extinction.

Climate Change is exacerbating every problem we are currently facing. Individual efforts are good but not enough, we need to start at the top with the government. We must stop agribusiness and return to agriculture. We need to pressure the government to redirect funding from the big food corporation's farms and CAFOs (*Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations*) to smaller Organic farms. We need to stop the extraction of fossil fuels. We need to publicize more about how our food choices are hurting the environment, not only in the US but world-wide. For example, the Amazon rain forest is being cut down for palm oil trees and cattle grazing. Millions of people are starving around the world. They are looking for food wherever they can find it, consequently exposing themselves to animal-to-human viruses—Ebola, Swine flu, bird flu, COVID-19.

Organic farming for plant-based diets is good for the environment, good for our health, requires fewer resources, feeds more people, keeps toxins from the soil, air and our bodies, and saves the animals. Human beings do not need animal flesh to live, but they can't live without plants in their diets. Any nutrients humans get from animals come from the plants the animals or their prey eat. Elephants and rhinos are vegans, grizzly bears are omnivores, lions and wolves eat herbivores.

Yes, going vegetarian/vegan means that fast food restaurants, steak houses, and supermarkets will have to change, but they don't have to disappear, just reinvent themselves.

Jobs need not be lost, in fact there are more 'green' jobs now than fossil fuel jobs. Going vegan is a very personal choice, made for many different reasons. A vegan luncheon using locally grown foods will not change people's minds, (I know this from personal experience with family members). We need to rethink our *modus operandi*. We need to work with the other social justice groups because it's all connected—homelessness, farm workers, racism, jobs—you name it. Everything we do should help either slow down or remediate the effects of climate change. If the next several generations can't survive on the changed earth, nothing else matters. Please read the book!"

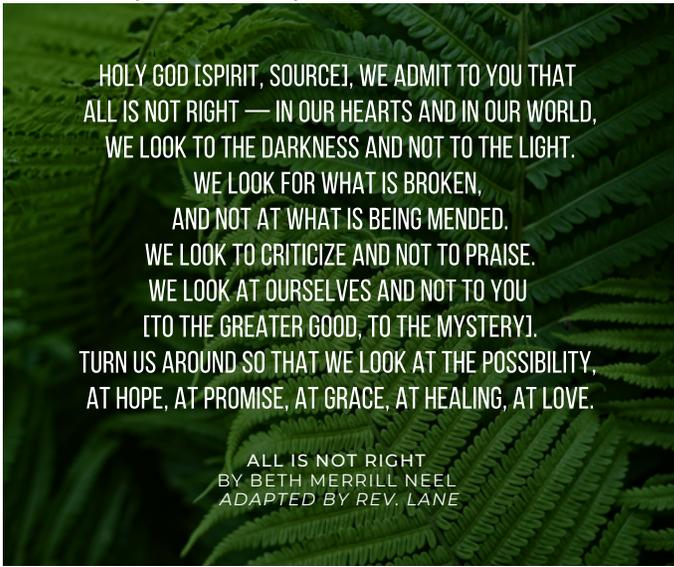
So do pay attention to the food-related theme, do keep Juanita's words in your heart, and do keep the hymn in your head with a new verse: Read With Me!

Our next EcoJustice Group meeting is October 4 at 12:30pm on Zoom. We will discuss the introduction to *On Fire, A burning case for the Green New Deal* by Naomi Klein. Join us on Zoom or read on your own.

AND, VOTE, HELP OTHERS VOTE,
VOTE, HELP OTHERS VOTE, VOTE, HELP
OTHERS VOTE! ❖

Midweek Meditation Reflections

Submitted by Emma Barry



HOLY GOD [SPIRIT, SOURCE], WE ADMIT TO YOU THAT
ALL IS NOT RIGHT — IN OUR HEARTS AND IN OUR WORLD,
WE LOOK TO THE DARKNESS AND NOT TO THE LIGHT.
WE LOOK FOR WHAT IS BROKEN,
AND NOT AT WHAT IS BEING MENDED.
WE LOOK TO CRITICIZE AND NOT TO PRAISE.
WE LOOK AT OURSELVES AND NOT TO YOU
[TO THE GREATER GOOD, TO THE MYSTERY].
TURN US AROUND SO THAT WE LOOK AT THE POSSIBILITY,
AT HOPE, AT PROMISE, AT GRACE, AT HEALING, AT LOVE.

ALL IS NOT RIGHT
BY BETH MERRILL NEEL
ADAPTED BY REV. LANE

FIAC: The Framework Guiding First Universalist's Social Justice Efforts

Submitted by Joy Leccese, FIAC Chair

If you are new to First Universalist Church, or a seasoned member with the need for a refresher, here is a simple explanation of how our church organizes its social justice work.



FIAC (The Faith in Action Council): is made of three to five members appointed by the Board. Present members in FIAC are Becky Elwell, Joy Leccese, Jean Ott, and Connie Valk. They are charged with identifying issues that the full

congregation is willing to support. The present issue is Racial Justice, which was supported by a vote of the congregation. FIAC's role is one of management and support.



FIRE (First Universalist Initiative for Racial Equality): is the present name for the team spearheading the congregational issue of Racial Justice. It is

coordinating with SPARC (*Spiritus Anti-Racism Coalition*) of Spiritus Christi Church. The initial vote of the congregation was to work with SPARC on the development of a Civil Rights Heritage Park and the Black Community Focus Fund. Recent events have pivoted the attention. The main actions at this time focus on the support our church gives to the downtown rallies/protests. They also provide educational opportunities through film discussion and workshops. Members of the FIRE team include chairs Elizabeth Osta and Theo Munson, with other members Dave VanArsdale, Richard Reed, Peggy Meeker, Shelley Adams, Kelly Scott, Tim Mullins, Kitty Forbush, and Donna Anderson, with Rev. Lane Campbell as ex-officio.

Social Justice Circles are outside (and sometimes related to) the congregational project screened by FIAC and approved by the Board. Each group is open to new participants. New Social Justice Circles can form with a minimum of five people that will support the effort. Present groups are:

- **Animal Ministries of Rochester, NY**
led by Lois Baum
- **Crafting Blankets for the Homeless**
led by Lisa Gwinner
- **EcoJustice**
led by Sarah Singal
- **Harvesting Justice**
led by Connie Valk
- **Meals for the Homeless**
led by Carole Hoffman
- **Roc/ACTS**
(Leader TBD – Rev. Lane is involved in the clergy with the organization)
- **School #7**
led by Bill Elwell



RAIHN (Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network): has been an ongoing church project onto itself. It works with numerous other congregations to house families with children. At this time, instead of housing the families in our church four times a year, families are housed in low cost motels. Our church supported this effort this past summer with a matching grant.

This effort is led by Marti Eggers, Ed Deller, and Chris Degolyer. ❖

Race in a Brave Space (RiBS)

Dialogues with Verdis L. Robinson

This series of dialogues creates a brave space to learn, grow, and act toward antiracism—all in the context of our UU principles—especially concerning the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Participants will engage in real talk about race in relationship to (1) American History, (2) the Unitarian Universalist faith, (3) local Rochester history, and (4) an inspiring meditation to lift up racial justice.

All sessions will be virtual from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Dialogue #1:

“What My History Teacher Never Taught Me” – Friday, October 16

Drawing from Mr. Robinson’s teaching African American history and decolonizing American history, we will explore hard truths by lifting up marginalized voices and experiences. We will learn what was intentionally left out of the historical narrative, why, and what to do about it.

Dialogue #2:

“Wilderness Journey” – Friday, November 13

Participants will preview the film, *Wilderness Journey: The Struggle for Black Empowerment and Racial Justice within the Unitarian Universalist Association, 1967-1970* (found on YouTube). We will reflect together on its lessons, what is currently plaguing our religious tradition, and imagine what our future as UUs could look like.

Dialogue #3:

Rochester’s History of Systemic Racism – Friday, January 22, 2021

From the fiery destruction of Frederick Douglass’ home to the uprising in July 1964 to the perpetuation of residential segregation, will explore the systemic racism in Rochester’s history. What have we really learned? What is being done? What is OUR vision for our community?

Dialogue #4:

Enduring the Long Night: A Meditation – Friday, March 19, 2021

Mr. Robinson will share an interpretation of Psalm 30:5 “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” What does it take for the joy to come? We will create a collective meditation on enduring the long night of racism to get to that glorious morning together.



Verdis Robinson’s guest leadership is being sponsored by the FIRE team of the First Universalist Church. Congregational members will receive zoom links to the virtual seminars. Free-will offerings will be greatly appreciated – money received will support other activities toward achieving racial equity.

To make a free will donation, send a check to 150 S. Clinton Ave, Rochester NY 14604, and write RiBS in the memo line, or click the donate button on uuroc.org and put RiBS in the note area.



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.

Worship service begins at 10:30am Sundays

Minister | Rev. Lane Campbell

Minister of Life Span Faith Development |

Rev. Michelle Yates

Music Director | Brock Tjosvold

Office Manager | Emma Barry

Office hours: Tue.–Fri. 9am–4pm;
closed Monday.

Nursery Care Provider |

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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.