

Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

November 2013

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Our Outlook

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Sunday Services | November 2013

Nov. 3 | *Saints and Souls*

In multiple religious traditions, from pagan to Christian, in this season the veil between the realms is thinnest. Today's service will consider the realms. We will also honor long-term members.

– Rev. Martha Munson

Nov. 10 | *Beyond Categorical Thinking: The Van Gogh Café*

“The problem with stereotypes is not that they are wrong. The problem with stereotypes is that they reduce people to a single story.” --Chimanda Adichie We'll look at stereotypes and story in the context of our ministerial search.

Keith Kron, Director of Transitions at the UUA and Rev. Martha Munson

Nov 17 | *Why Can't We all Just Get Along? Or, Why Can't We all Just Behave Better?*

A service about professional aspirations and professional ethics, purchased by John Wellin at the Service Auction.

– Rev. Martha Munson

Nov. 24 | *Abundant Thanks*

This is a service for all ages for Thanksgiving. Come, let us together usher in the holiday season!

– Rev. Martha Munson, Lori Staubitz, and friends

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Nov. 28 | *Interfaith Thanksgiving Service*

This year's Interfaith Thanksgiving service will be held at Our Lady Queen of Peace, Roman Catholic Church (601 Edgewood Ave.) The service will be held at 11 am.

This annual event is the oldest continuing Union Thanksgiving Service in the United States. It was first held in 1874 when the First Universalist Church, the First Unitarian Church, and Temple B'rith Kodesh joined together. Over the years other faith communities--including the Islamic Center of Rochester, the Catholic Diocese of Rochester, Third Presbyterian Church of Rochester, Baptist Temple, and the First Baptist Church of Rochester--have joined the tradition of a service dedicated to gratitude and interfaith cooperation.

Our regular morning service as well as Religious Education classes begin at 10:30am.





Walking With You

Message from the Interim Minister

A Prayer Of Thanksgiving

Max Coots

Let us give thanks...

For generous friends...with hearts as big as hubbards
and smiles as bright as their blossoms;

For feisty friends as tart as apples;

For continuous friends, who, like scallions and
cucumbers, keep reminding us we had them;

For crotchety friends, as sour as rhubarb and as
indestructible;

For handsome friends, who are as gorgeous as eggplants
and as elegant as a row of corn -- and the others -- as
plain as potatoes, and as good for you.

For funny friends, who are as silly as brussels sprouts and
as amusing as Jerusalem artichokes, and serious friends as
complex as cauliflowers and as intricate as onions;

For friends as unpretentious as cabbages, as subtle as
summer squash, as persistent as parsley, as delightful as
dill, as endless as zucchini, and who -- like parsnips -- can
be counted on to see you through the long winter;

For old friends, nodding like sunflowers in the evening-
time, and young friends coming on as fast as radishes;

For loving friends, who wind around as like tendrils, and
hold us despite our blights, wilts, and witherings;

And finally, for those friends now gone, like gardens past,
that have been harvested - but who fed us in their times
that we might have life thereafter;

For all these we give thanks. ❖

Faithfully, *Martha*



Gleanings

from Religious Growth & Learning

Rev. Lori Staubitz, Acting Director of Faith Development

“Ageing With Grace” and “End of Life Issues” were two
of the many topics brought up for exploration at the
spring Adult Faith development retreat. So I wanted to
share some thoughts with you on the subject now we are
ankle deep in leaves.

This is the time for turning inward. Much is returning
to the earth. Pumpkins, full bodied and round were cut
loose from the vine a month ago. Now that same vine
lays waiting its return to the fields. Summer blossoms
opened wide to the morning sun in June now hang on
brown lifeless branches and rattle in the chill Autumn
winds. It seems as though life is taking leave and turning
from all that was once young, vibrant and green. Sure,
spring will come again and lead us back to summer and
summer to fall. But right now, there is a sweet sadness to
of this season of endings.

Poet Nancy Wood invites us to rest in the assurance of
the ongoing cycle of death and rebirth when she writes

You shall ask
What good are dead leaves?
And I will tell you
They nourish the sore earth.
You shall ask
What reason is there for winter?
And I will tell you
To bring about new leaves
You shall ask
Why are the leaves so green?
And I will tell you
Because they are rich with life
You shall ask
Why must summer end?
And I will tell you
So that the leaves can die. –Nancy Wood

We too belong to the earth. Our ancient ancestors were
keenly aware of the balance of life and death. We affirm
this deeper connection as we embrace our Universalist
heritage, reminding us that nothing can separate us from
the wholeness of which we are a part... not even the grave. ❖



Martha & Waitstill Sharp and the Birth of the UUSC

Submitted by Michael Scott

I am writing this column from Jerusalem, in Israel, where my family and I have had the privilege of touring for several days. I spent this morning at Yad Vashem, the Israeli Holocaust Museum and Memorial. It encompasses many buildings and commemorative sites, spread across a beautiful, forested section of Mount Hertzl to the west of the city. One of several outdoor shrines is the Garden of the Righteous Among the Nations, dedicated to the non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. Of the hundreds of names engraved on the stone walls of the garden, only three are from the United States—among them Waitstill and Martha Sharp.

The Sharps were married in 1927. Waitstill had heard the call to ministry while a student at Harvard Law. Martha had studied Social Work at Northwestern University, and served briefly as Director of the Girls' program at Hull House in Chicago. They settled first in Meadville, PA and then in Wellesley, MA, where Waitstill served Unitarian churches.

In 1938, the Sharps were recruited by the American Unitarian Association to head a relief mission to Czechoslovakia, in the wake of the Nazi invasion. Under threat of arrest by the Gestapo, they later fled to Lisbon, and made their way back into Vichy France, where they organized and carried out the daring rescue, through Marseilles, Barcelona, and Lisbon, of the famous German Jewish author Lion Feuchtwanger.

Over the course of several missions, the Sharps are credited with arranging the escape of up to 3000 persecuted people. Their missions formed the seed of what became, in May of 1940, the Unitarian Service Committee. The Universalist Service Committee, for its part, was officially founded in mid 1945, as an outgrowth of the War Relief Committee, established by the Universalist Church of America in 1940. The two organizations merged in 1963 to create the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), an independent, non-sectarian associate of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

Though guided by UU principles, the UUSC receives no financial support from the UUA, and one need not be a Unitarian Universalist to join. The organization focuses its efforts on civil liberties, economic justice, environmental justice, and the rights of marginalized and oppressed groups during natural or man-made disasters. The UUSC also mobilizes grassroots volunteers for letter-writing, human rights advocacy, and "Just Works" camps for short-term hands-on projects in the US and around the world.

In April 1941 the Unitarian Service Committee adopted as its symbol a flaming chalice commissioned by USC executive directory Charles Joy and designed by refugee artist Hans Deutsch. This symbol has subsequently come to represent the Unitarian Universalist movement as a whole. To learn more about the UUSC, visit uusoc.org. To see Yad Vashem's tribute to the Sharps, visit www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/stories/sharp.asp ❖

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Join Religious Education at First Universalist!

Do you have an interest in Religious Education? The First Universalist religious education program could use your help! We have openings for volunteers in all aspects of the program including teaching, program planning, nursery care and certain one-time projects. We hope you will join us!

Please contact Charlie Courtsal (gwincourt@frontiernet.net) if you are interested. ❖

'Tis the season!



Submitted by Bryan Holten

Music Sunday is December 15. If you are interested in singing with the choir, please write to Bryan Holten <music@uuroc.org> no later than early November. All are welcome! ❖

Winter 2013 Offerings for Adults Lifespan Faith Development

The Source of Human Good

by Henry Nelson Wieman;

Facilitated by Rev. Lori Staubitz, Director of Faith Development

Wednesdays, January 8th, 15th and 22nd.

Life, Death and all that comes between... If you would like to explore some of the deeper questions of the human spirit with others in a safe and supportive group, come join us for three evenings as we delve into *The Source of Human Good* by Henry Nelson Wieman. As a liberal Unitarian theologian, Wieman searched for a natural way to think about the source of creation, goodness and evil in the world. We hope you will come prepared to expand on your own theology in relationship to some of Wieman's findings. Reading the book is optional but we ask that you plan to attend all three sessions.

Please R.S.V.P. to reserve your place.

No fees required.

Contact Rev. Lori Staubitz at DRE@uuroc.org;

Call the church office (585) 546-2826

or sign up in the Clara Barton Lounge on or before December 27th.

Journey from Religion to Spirituality

Rev. Lori Staubitz; Director of Faith Development

**Wednesdays February 5th, 12th and 19th;
6:30-8:30pm.**

Have you ever considered yourself "spiritual" but not really "religious"? If so, you are in good company. But what does it really mean to be spiritual? What are some of the thoughts, feelings and actions related to leading a spiritual life?

We will explore the topic through readings, personal reflections and some tried and true spiritual practices including journaling, meditation and active listening.

Please R.S.V.P. to reserve your place.

No fees required.

Contact Rev. Lori Staubitz at DRE@uuroc.org;

Call the church office (585) 546-2826

or sign up in the Clara Barton Lounge on or before January 27th, 2014. ❖

Keith Kron is Coming to Our Church!

Submitted by Christine DeGolyer

So what's the big deal? Read on. It's a MAJOR deal!

Rev. Keith Kron, director of *UUA Transitions (formerly Ministerial Settlement)*, will visit us the weekend of November 9-10. Keith provides counsel and resources to congregations who are changing ministers and also advises ministers who are seeking parish positions. Read the last sentence again. That's why it's a MAJOR deal!

On Saturday morning, November 9th, Keith will lead a workshop for us titled "Beyond Categorical Thinking". What is categorical thinking? When we think about the minister we want, various categories, such as age, weight, sex, or ethnicity may distract us from the qualities we really want. In the workshop, we will:

- Consider the hopes, expectations, and concerns we have for a new minister
- Learn more about the ministerial search process, and
- Explore how thinking categorically about people sometimes interferes with choosing the best candidate.

This is your chance to ask the person who has the answers about ministerial transitions; he has led this workshop 141 times. Please join us in the Clara Barton Lounge on Saturday, November 9th at 9 AM. Breakfast will be served. The workshop will begin promptly at 9:30 AM and end by 12:30 PM. Childcare available if you contact Connie Valk cwalk@frontiernet.net by November 1st.

Keith will also lead the Sunday Service on November 10th. But, if you don't attend the workshop on November 9th, you will miss an incredible opportunity to interact with a major leader in the UUA.

The Ministerial Search Committee ❖



Photo by Nancy Pierce

Could You be One of “Many Hands?”

Submitted by Ann Rhody

While the expression, “many hands make light work” rings true at First Universalist, it’s also true that many hands make any job more fun!!

There are two major fundraisers coming up that could use your help:

- Our Holiday Shoppe takes place during coffee hour each Sunday from November 24-December 22. We offer handmade articles and gifts, as well as a few baked goods. Members donate items to sell, and the proceeds go to support church programs. We need high quality items to sell, and volunteers to help staff the Holiday Shoppe on Sundays.
- Our Service Auction takes place on Sunday, February 2, 2014. We need donations of services & other items to auction off, as well as volunteers to set up, help with the luncheon, tally the bids, & more!

Volunteering for a fundraiser is a great way to build fellowship and get to know others at church. These events have experienced leaders who will help to find a job that is just the right size for you!

If you are interested in helping, please contact Ann Rhody at annrhody@yahoo.com.

Thank you from your friends in Finance! ❖



Membership

Submitted by Nancy Gaede

We have seen many new faces at coffee hour in recent weeks. That’s great! What’s even better? Seeing all of you making such an effort to make them feel welcome and included. We are truly becoming one big membership committee! Want to be even more involved? We can always use a hand with greeting and ushering on Sunday mornings. These are easy but important jobs that go a long way in making visitors feel welcome at First Universalist. Contact Nancy Gaede to find out about greeting opportunities. Carol and Marty Vyverberg will be delighted to “plug” you in to an ushering slot. Thanks. ❖

There’s No Place Like Home

Submitted by Ann Rhody

I have written before about my experiences visiting other UU churches while traveling, and I had the opportunity to visit a few more while on an extended trip in September. Experiencing life in a church from a visitor’s point of view has given me some ideas and insight, but the biggest lesson I take from all of this visiting is that there really is NO place just like our “home” at First Universalist of Rochester!

Each UU church (more so than other denominations, I think) has its own “feel” and “personality.” In our travels, we found churches with historical buildings and modern ones. Lots of children and very few. Newer ministers and seasoned veterans. But nowhere did we find a congregation just like ours. We have a unique and somewhat “magical” combination here- our beautifully restored historic sanctuary, our strong and vibrant music program, our downtown location and social action programs, our generous and dedicated volunteers, and much more. As we continue our interim work with Rev. Munson, it is true that we must change what is no longer working, and remove any obstacles that keep us from growing. But it’s important to remember that our job is not to try to be like any other congregation but our own! While we can “tweak” and improve operations here based on what we learn from other places, we want to let our own unique personality shine through to our ministerial candidates, our city, and the world.

There really IS no place like our spiritual home, and no congregation just like ours. So as we continue to change and evolve, let’s take pride in all of the wonderful things we are, and all of the wonderful things we yet shall be!!

Ann Rhody for the Transition Team
Karl Abbott, chair, Bill Elwell, Mary Louise Gerek ❖

Drop-In Discussion, November Schedule

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

Drop-in discussions are held each Sunday in the adult lounge on the second floor of our church at 9:15 a.m. except during the summer. 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. Here is the schedule.

November 3 | *Gandhi and Peace*

Our discussion will be led by a representative of the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence. Based here in Rochester, N.Y., the Gandhi Institute works for nonviolence education, sustainability, environmental conservation, restorative justice and public awareness of nonviolence as knowledge critical to human thriving. Thanks to Eileen Fernandez for arranging this program.

November 10 | *Our Gridlocked Government*

What does it say about our American system that we have to worry about our government shutting down or not paying its bills? Is there a better way? Phil Ebersole will lead a discussion.

November 17 | *Open forum discussion – topic to be announced.*

November 24 | **Virtue Ethics**

If there is no reward or punishment in the afterlife, what reason is there to be a good person? One answer is "virtue ethics," which holds that people of good character thrive better in any given set of circumstances than people of bad character, and that every decision you make and every action you take molds your character. Phil Ebersole will do a presentation and lead a discussion.

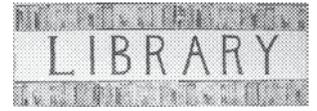
The third Sunday of each month will be held open for anyone who wants to lead a discussion or do a presentation related to that month's social justice plate offering.

If you have a topic you'd like discussed or, better still, would like to lead a discussion, please speak to Phil Ebersole. ❖



World Community

Submitted by Keith Stott



What was the inspiration for our church's Affirmation of Faith? Earlier Unitarian and Universalist statements, of course. *Dispossessing the American Indian* by Wilbur R. Jacobs reveals a similarity to Native American philosophy "which tended to view a universe with all things having a certain spiritual essence". Reading Jacob's book could well draw us closer to our indigenous sisters and brothers and "the goal of world community". Call number is **970.5J** ❖

Friday night Cozy Suppers

Submitted by Janet Rothbeind

All come and join us for the second in a series of Friday night Cozy Suppers.

On November 22 at 5:30 to 7:30 PM, we will examine the Second of the Unitarian Universalist seven principles: "We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: Justice, equity and compassion in human actions." Sounds like a mouthful. Let's look closer. A vegan option will be provided.

Sign up on the bulletin board in the Clara Barton Lounge or contact Connie Valk cvalk@frontiernet.net or 585-467-3191. ❖



The *Universalist Herald* has a new web site

www.universalist-herald.org

Your visit is appreciated.

They gave up their beds for a night...

Submitted by Marti Eggers



Car City, a fundraiser for RAIHN*, brought youth groups, individuals and families together for a night of sleeping in their cars, experiencing what homelessness might be like for adults and

children. Beyond concern about the barest of creature comforts, how do students do homework? How do they keep awake in class? What do they say when other kids ask those tough questions like – Where do you live? Can I come over to your house after school today?

Car City raised over \$7000 and had many positive stories. There are plans in the works to do it again in the Spring 2014, to include many youth groups, individuals and families who could not participate this time.

NEXT EVENT: Shop ‘Til You Drop and Dine for RAIHN - Tuesday December 3rd, starting at 5 PM at Pittsford Plaza. Benucci’s Restaurant will donate 20% of the dining tickets to RAIHN. People simply need to say that they are dining for RAIHN when they come in. Reservations are highly recommended.

Shop ‘Til You Drop participating stores: *One World Goods, Stefan Otter Jewelers and Hobby House Toys.*

Others may join in. Participating merchants will donate a portion of their sales after 5 PM on December 3rd to RAIHN.

NEXT HOST WEEK: November 10 – 17, 2013

*** RAIHN, the Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network**, is a consortium of 14 faith communities that host families in temporary need of housing, and 28 faith communities that provide volunteers and other support to the host congregations. First Universalist is a host congregation, supported by St. Mary’s, the Church of Love, and Aldersgate United Methodist Church of Greece. Four times a year, for a week each time, volunteers from the four congregations work together to provide a welcoming, safe place for these families to come home to after a day at the RAIHN Center where they get help looking for housing and, for some, new employment. We prepare and serve a hot evening meal, help with homework, offer a lap, a story and a hug, a listening ear, a word of encouragement, overnight presence, breakfast and whatever else might be needed before the families return to their jobs or to the Center for another day of hard work. ❖

House Report Highlights - Nov. 2013

Submitted by Alain Perregaux

House Committee

The House Committee met formally on October 6 for the first time in one year. There was a lot of catching up to do. Besides a litany of maintenance tasks, the main concern that emerged is to find the proper guidelines to preserve the pristine quality of the carpet and the cushions in the sanctuary, i.e. asking people to avoid bringing coffee or tea into the sanctuary. We are learning the hard way how ugly the coffee stains on the lounge carpet are and we want to prevent this problem from spreading to the sanctuary.

Special Request to All

Please avoid bringing coffee or tea into the sanctuary. If you must have liquid at your disposal, use water and save the coffee for the coffee hour after the service. The House Committee and the whole congregation appreciate your understanding.

South Balcony

The last old cushions were disposed of on Thursday October 10. The South balcony, where they were stored, has been cleaned and is now reopened for business, except for one aisle where the remnants of the new carpet are waiting for a permanent repository.

Court Street Entrance Exterior Lights

Some time late in September, during the *Fringe Festival*, the two exterior lights on either side of the Court Street door were stolen. The theft of items containing copper is a well known problem but nobody expected that it would come to this. Their replacement presents an interesting dilemma in the sense that we need to preserve the character of the place without making the new devices a magnet for thieves. One idea is to find two lamps similar to the one that is next to the parking lot entrance.

Snow Clearing

The Church’s snow blower has undergone its first overhaul in years. Marty Vyverberg had an acquaintance of his do it for us at a very good price. Thanks Marty. A contract with a snow plower has been signed for the 2013-14 season. ❖

First Universalist Church

150 South Clinton Avenue

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 10:30am Sundays

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 McCarty White

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