



Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY

March 2016

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Sunday Services | March 2016

March 6 | *A Home Away from Home*

What does it mean to feel the pull of that peculiar spiritual condition-- nostalgia?
- Celie Katovitch

March 13 | *Poetry Of Winter And Spring*

When the groundhog doesn't see his shadow, it means an early spring? Sharing the poetry of winter and spring might move the seasons along. Bring a poem to share and maybe we'll say goodbye to winter and hello to the geese and robins.
- Patti Goodwin and the worship associates.

March 20 | *Stories and Songs of Light and Dark*

This year, two spring holidays coincide: Palm Sunday, marking Jesus' symbolic entry into Jerusalem, an act that would culminate in his arrest; and the Vernal Equinox, marking a day of balance between the hours of day and night. In honor of them both, we will lift up the interplay of light and dark in our lives, through story, ritual, and song. Children may stay for the full service, or to go upstairs for child care.

For this service, you are welcome bring a small object that represents winter or spring for you, to be placed on the altar table.

- Celie Katovitch

March 27 | **Easter Sunday**

A celebration of the many ways we rise to meet life, even in the wake of despair.
- Celie Katovitch

Tenebrae Service - Friday, **March 25th, 7PM**, in the Sanctuary.

Tenebrae - from the Latin for "shadows"-is a quiet service of music and readings, which honors the sacred darkness in our lives. Candles are extinguished one at a time, leaving only the light of the chalice at service's end. Names of loved ones we have lost are read during the meditation; if you would like a loved one's name to be read, please speak to or e-mail Rev. Celie <minister@uuroc.org>. All are welcome for this contemplative, healing worship service.

Please note - near the service's end, there is a "strepitus" - a sharp noise.
- Celie Katovitch

Regular service begins at 10:30am





Pastor's Perspective

Message from Rev. Celie Katovitch

Parker Palmer writes: "There is a hard truth to be told: before spring becomes beautiful, it is plug ugly, nothing but mud and muck. I have walked in the early spring through fields that will suck your boots off, a world so wet and woeful it makes you yearn for the return of ice. But in that muddy mess, the conditions for rebirth are being created."

In the same spirit, Carl Jung remarks: "Life itself flows from springs both clear and muddy... [Therefore] every renewal of life needs the muddy as well as the clear."

I am glad for those Easters that fall during March-- a month that's often a muddy, and yes, even "plug ugly" time of half-winter and half-spring for us here in western New York. It reminds me that renewal and rebirth are seldom instantaneous. Seldom is the "stone rolled away" with ease.

Even more seldom is the process of renewal purely beautiful. It can't always be captured in images of sunshine and birdsong and gaily blooming flowers. More often, we have to do the hard work of trudging through the "muck": making our slow way through times of difficulty and transition. Sometimes things can seem dull and ugly, and the going is so gradual, that it is hard to imagine that we could be living the Easter story.

But the truth of that story -- not its facticity, but its truth-- has as much to do with life's messiness -- its ugly side-- as with its beauty. (The Rev. Earl Holt, formerly minister of the First Unitarian Church of St. Louis, remarked, "Failure and death are the very source of ultimate triumph and life... Good Friday is the very pathway to Easter.") It's a story of the cycles in which we live, and the hope that can hide down in the muck; the promise that must rise, as the flowers do, from mud and ashes.

May you find ways to honor the struggles within yourself that, like this month of March, pull you back and forth-- between growth and safety, ambiguity and certainty, between one season of your life and another. May you know that in that struggle, something new is coming to life. May you trust that hope and love abide with you always.

In faith, --Celie



Walking Together:

Director of Life Span Faith Development

Submitted by Michelle Yates, DRE

Another month; another source!!

In a living tradition like Unitarian Universalism, there are many sources that influence our spirituality, theology and way of living into our faith. The "Six Sources" try to capture, as concisely as possible, these influences.

At our fourth and final *Cozy Night Supper* this year (Friday, March 18th 5:30-7:30pm), we will be considering the fourth source: "**Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves.**" As I consider this lesson, I can't help but to consider the strict rules of hospitality in the biblical Jewish and Christian traditions.

Growing up in Buffalo, I'm proud to be from the "city of good neighbors." It is part of my culture and idea of good manners to be friendly to neighbors and to help others bear the rigors of upstate winters. Recently, my idea of "upstate hospitality" was upstaged by "southern hospitality." I've always heard the phrase, but a personal experience means so much more.

We drove to Florida on our family vacation, and were impressed at being treated like a friend by so many. On our way through Georgia, we were part of a fender bender that ruined a tire, rim and bent our tie rod. We were afraid of the worst news from the mechanical professionals we encountered. We were surprised again and again, by people who went out of their way to help us: the tow guy who straightened our tie rod but only charged us for the tow, the multiple tire stores who were genuinely sad they couldn't help us and in "Miracle on 34th Street" style tried to find us someone who could, and the Firestone employees who went across town to get us a tire rim in order to get us back on the road asking only for a good review and pic of us on vacation.

It made me question if I would have been as hospitable; if I treat and love people like just "neighbors," or like friends and extended family. It reminded me not only to consider the ways I love and show hospitality, but to be grateful for the unexpected sources of love and hospitality that can change my day, my vacation, or my life!

How have you given or received love this month?

How might you enrich your practice of hospitality?

*-From you I receive, To you I give,
Together we share and from this we live.*

Children's Sunday

Submitted by Michelle Yates

Children's Sunday in March will be on the "First Sunday" March 6th, instead of the usual "Second Sunday." The Rochester Model Rail Road Club will be having their open house that day. Our children and their families will really appreciate this wonder in our very own building as our after church activity. ❖



Gather The Spirit

continues this month, Wednesdays at 5PM through March 16th, in the back of the Sanctuary. This is a midweek moment of renewal, beginning with open meditation and continuing with shared reflection upon a poem. All are welcome to drop in. You can also let Rev. Celie know if you would like to receive a weekly poem by e-mail for personal reflection. ❖

Adult Religious Education

UU History

Meets the following Thursdays from 1:30–3:30pm

Note: This is a change in date and time from previous Outlooks.

March 3rd - Part 5

Evolution: Beyond Christianity

April 7th - Part 6

Merger and Beyond: The Road to Merger and the First 50 Years

We will be watching one of the six hour long videos produced by Ron Cordes for the series *Long Strange Trip: 2000 years of UU History*, followed by facilitated discussion and conversation.

Feel free to come to one or all sessions as you can.

Please RSVP so we can plan for enough seating to Michelle Yates at edu@uuroc.org or 585-310-2484.

Childcare available if requested a week in advance. ❖

Earth Week (and beyond!)

Submitted by Rev. Celie Katovitch

This year, First Universalist joins many other Rochester institutions in lifting up issues of environmental sustainability during the month of April. There will be several exciting activities to be part of right here at church.

On Friday, April 15th, 7PM in the Clara Barton Lounge - A free screening of the film "Growing Cities," about urban farming, followed by a discussion led by some of the members of our very own garden crew.

On Tuesday, April 19th, 7PM in the Clara Barton Lounge - A free screening of the film "Bidder 70," about UU Tim DeChristopher, who was jailed for his protest of climate injustice. This film will be followed by a presentation by Dr. Susan Spencer, of the Solarize Rochester initiative.

On Thursday, April 21st, at 6PM in the Sanctuary - First Universalist is hosting a panel organized by the Rochester Sierra Club, on sustainable agriculture and climate change.

Stay tuned for more info to come! ❖



Social Justice Plate Recipient

Submitted by Sarah Singal

The March recipient of the Social Justice plate will be **Rural and Migrant Ministries**. This organization works to bring justice to farmworkers and their families. Although farmworkers are the backbone of New York State's \$4 billion agricultural industry, they are being exploited. Many farmworkers earn little more than minimum wage, with no overtime pay. Since farmworkers are not included in the present labor laws of NYS, they are not entitled to a day of rest, nor are they eligible for workers' compensation when injured on the job although exposed to many safety hazards in their work. The organization also helps to send the children to summer camp and involves youth in an economic project. The plate will be collected on March 20th. Thank you in advance for your generosity! ❖

News and notes from your Finance Team

Submitted by Ann Rhody for the Finance Team

- Wow! What an auction! Our 2016 Service Auction was a huge success: We had a great time, and we raised over \$6700 for our church's programs! This was truly a group effort: over 30 people volunteered to help in some way, and many, many more of you donated or placed bids on services or items. There are too many names to list all here, but big thanks go to organizer **Paula Marchese**; lunch coordinator **Tim Mullins**; clerks and tellers **Bill Jones**, **Dave VanArsdale**, **Karl Abbott**, and **Glenda Brayman**; and proxy clerks **Connie Valk** and **Sarah Singal**. Thanks to all who prepared, served, and cleaned up the lunch. And a big welcome and thanks to the brand new auctioneer on staff: **Kitty Forbush**!
- Our new treasurer, **Dick Shroyer**, is off and running in his role! If you have questions for Dick, you can reach him via e-mail at rashroyer@frontiernet.net. You can help Dick by being sure to fill out any check requests completely, providing supporting documents and receipts, and being patient as we make the transition.
- The finance team will soon be developing the 2016-17 budget. If you have ideas or items for the budget, please contact Finance Chair **Ann Rhody** at annrhody@gmail.com. ❖

Stewardship Campaign 2016:

We will be Growing Together!

Submitted by Rachael Baldanza

Our annual stewardship campaign is on the horizon. With a theme of growing together stewardship co-chairs **John Akers** and **Rachael Baldanza** will encourage you support, sustain and strengthen our church and its mission with a stewardship pledge (and in other ways). Stewardship Sunday is April 17. More details will be coming soon, so prepare to join us as we grow together! ❖

Chili Cook Off



Submitted by William Elwell

In what has become a tradition at our church, the culinary skills of our members and friends will once again become the focus of our coffee hour after Sunday service for March 13th. Competing for a grand prize (usually a gift card to a local Chili's restaurant) is only a small encouragement for participants who are more motivated to demonstrate their prize chili recipe as simply the best prepared by an aficionado of this American classic.

Please let **Bill Elwell** <williambearcat@gmail.com> know if you plan to participate in this battle for chili supremacy among Universalists of Rochester. ❖

Reminder-St. Lawrence District Dissolution: Regionalization Vote

Submitted by Ed Deller

A vote will be held at the St. Lawrence District Assembly on April 2 to dissolve the St. Lawrence District in favor of creating the Central East Region Group (CERG). The First Universalist board of trustees will vote on a church position in March. Your input to the board is encouraged and welcomed. Delegates will be appointed for the church per our normal process and should be well informed on this issue in advance of the April 2 District Assembly vote.

You can contact a board member for more information or access information on this topic at: www.cerguua.org/about-us/regionalization.html. ❖

From Membership

Submitted by Nancy Gaede

Please join us in welcoming our newest members, Martha Welch and Peter Perine. Do you feel that you've found your spiritual home at First Universalist? Are you considering formally joining our congregation? Have you recently become a member? Reverend Celie and the Membership Committee invite you to join them on Saturday, April 9, in the Clara Barton Lounge for a Path to Membership Class. Our time together begins with a delicious brunch. This will be followed by conversations about Unitarian Universalism and the nuts and bolts of membership. Those who decide to become members and those who have recently joined will be recognized during the service on New Member Sunday, April 10. If you plan to attend, please sign up at the membership table, or contact **Nancy Gaede** by email, flower50@frontiernet.net by Sunday, April 3. ❖

Small Group Ministry



Small groups are a way to help us think about our spiritual lives through the process of sharing thoughts and experiences with others. Those new to First Universalist as well as seasoned members are welcome to participate. A new group is forming. New evening sessions begin in March.

Those who sign up commit themselves to attendance to all five sessions:

March 10, 24; April 7, 21; May 12. Each of the five sessions are held from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. This group is limited to seven participants.

Location of the sessions is the home of facilitator Connie Valk, located in the city close to the zoo. Sign-up is on the Religious Education Faith Development bulletin board or you can email Connie at cvalk@frontiernet.net.

Details about parking will be shared shortly before the sessions begin. ❖

Beginning Meditation Practice

A Beginning Meditation Practice will take place in the rear of the sanctuary each Wednesday from 5:15-6:30pm. This 10 week session will begin on March 23rd and extend through May 25th. No experience necessary! For more information contact Moritz Wagner moritz.wagner.swiss@gmail.com, **Kathy Russell** krussel6@frontiernet.net or **Brad Freeman** bradfreeman@frontiernet.net or join us on March 23rd. ❖

Cozy Night Supper

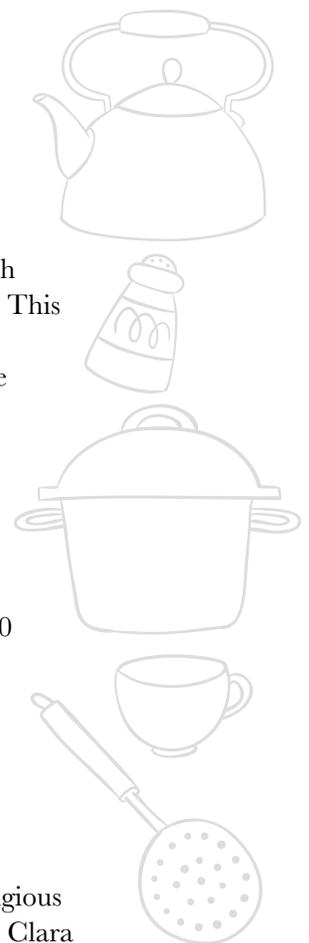
Submitted by Kathy Russell

Jewish and Christian Teachings

- March 18th

Our final COZY NIGHT SUPPER for the 2015-16 church year will be Friday, March 18th. This program, from 5:30 to 7:30, continues our exploration of the Unitarian Universalist religious sources. Held in the Clara Barton Lounge, a simple supper, including a vegan option, will be provided along with wonderful camaraderie - hopefully including you! At 6:30 we will then focus on the fourth source, "Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves".

Let us know of your ability to attend by signing up on the Religious Education Bulletin Board in the Clara Barton Lounge or by contacting **Kathy Russell** at krussel6@frontiernet.net. Your RSVP/sign up will allow us to prepare appropriately. Child-friendly activities exploring this source will be arranged if you make a request one week in advance. ❖



Living Our Values, Making A Difference

Submitted by Newcomb Losh, Communications Committee

Coffee Hour after our Sunday service is important to us. We take the time to connect with one another without the pressure of committees or tasks. Here, **Tim Mullins** (at left) and **Dolores Dalomba** arrange the food they've brought in to share.



All photographs by Newcomb Losh unless otherwise noted.



Rick Bartell (standing), regional director of education and outreach for Planned Parenthood of Central and Western New York, led a discussion of teenage pregnancy and Planned Parenthood's successful *In Control* program on January 24th.

Photograph by David Damico

Dick Gilbert (second from left) of InterfaithImpactNYS.org invited recent Drop-in Discussion participants to turn Spiritual Sundays into Moral Mondays by joining him to visit legislators in Albany on May 9 to advocate for issues where liberal religion can make a difference. (Clockwise from left: Lyle Beach, Dick, Phil Ebersole, Janus Mary Jones, Carole Hoffman, Lee London, David Damico. Almost shown: Hank Stone)



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.

Rochester Emergency Action Committee for the Homeless

Submitted by Carole Hoffman



Members of First Universalist prepared and served dinner to REACH Home residents. Left to right are: **Marti Eggers, Margaret Gallagher, Sarah Singal, Carole Hoffman** and **Connie Valk**. Present but not pictured: 10 members and friends.

To their credit, the local and state printed media are exposing the scourge of homelessness in a myriad of articles, publicizing the makeup of the population, solutions, and educating the public on how they can get involved. It indeed, has raised awareness of this problem. As many of you already know through your generous donations of time and treasure, a local shelter for the chronically homeless was created this past December, housing up to 40 people. It is called REACH (Rochester Emergency Action Committee for the Homeless), located in the Auditorium Theatre area. Its immense success is due to groups such as ours from the First Universalist Church who go in with a hot, already prepared, evening meal, to serve up to 60 people. The photo above was taken on February 5th, at which 10 of our members, plus friend Debbie, prepared a luscious meatloaf dinner to the extremely appreciative residents of the house. It was heartwarming to hear their repeated 'thanks'. As we are scheduled to prepare the Easter Dinner there, please let Carole Hoffman (choffman002@rochester.rr.com) know if you'd like to be part of this endeavor, for either Easter or for a future date. ❖



Weekly Peace Rally – Feb. 14, 2016

On Feb 14, in -6 degrees windchill, our own Hal Bauer (right) joined Peter Mitchell from Immanuel Baptist Church to rally for peace on the corner of Goodman St. and East Ave as they and others have every Sunday for the past 12 years. Said Hal, "Peace is a decision we make in our everyday lives."



Drop-In Discussion Schedule, March 2016

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

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

March 6 | *Paid Family Leave*

Brigit Hurley, policy analyst for The Children's Agenda, a local non-profit research and advocacy organization, will discuss legislation now pending in Albany concerning paid family leave insurance in New York state. She'll also discuss ways that TCA has identified as the best ways to support families living in poverty and to lessen poverty's impact on children. Time permitting, she'll answer questions about The Children's Agenda's Interfaith Collaborative.

March 13 | *The Four Elements of Success*

Robert L. Remley will discuss the ideas in *The Four Elements of Success* by Laurie Beth Jones, and lead a discussion. Jones describes human personality types in terms of the four elements (earth, water, wind and fire) and tells how you can determine what type you are, how to work with people of different personality types and better resolve conflicts in all types of situations.

March 20 | Mobilizing for a Livable Climate

Neely Kelley, New York state lead organizer for Mothers Out Front, will discuss that organization's work in building a social movement of mothers to make a swift, just and complete transition from fossil fuels to clean and renewable energy so our children and grandchildren inherit a livable climate.

March 27 | *Can We Be Good Without God?*

The traditional Universalist side of our faith teaches that "all are saved." Whatever you make of that statement, it implies we need not worry about the fear or outcome of the hereafter. If the hereafter is less a concern than traditional Christianity teaches, we are left with the here and now. What prompts us to behave in a manner that complements one another? Why should we concern ourselves with doing what we can to make our time on Earth joyful rather than miserable? How does this affect others and the planet? David Damico will lead a discussion drawing from *God* by Mark Vernon.

April 3 | *Reproductive Rights*

Kate Queary, public affairs organizer for Planned Parenthood of Central and Western New York, will discuss the role of clergy and people of faith in advocating for laws and policies that safeguard and strength access to reproductive medicine. In addition, she will give a brief overview of recent legislative activity and goals for 2016.

If you have a topic you'd like discussed or, better still, would be willing to lead a discussion, speak to Phil Ebersole. If you have an outside speaker in mind that you think should be invited, speak to Phil Ebersole or e-mail him at <phileb@frontiernet.net>. ❖

District Assembly 2016

The Nominating Committee is pleased to announce that delegates for the annual St. Lawrence District Assembly have been nominated.

Please consider attending this important event April 1st and 2nd in Syracuse, New York. The theme this year is 'Covenant'; on-line and advance registration will close on March 15. For further information regarding the District Assembly, visit www.sld.cerguua.org/conggrowth/districtassembly.html. ❖



News

Submitted by Keith Stott

Racial Profiling

How long did it take you – if you are a Euro-American Universalist – to learn what it means to be white? Thandeka (her name means "One who is loved by God") explores the concepts of whiteness and blackness in her thought-provoking book, *Learning To Be White: Money, Race, and God In America*. In reading her book you may learn how to deal with such situations as "...neither whites nor nonwhites were safe from police brutality when they entered a racial zone off-limits to their kind..." (page 22) and "...violence, which has long been endemic to southern life." (page 53). The call number of *Learning To Be White*, by Afro-American U-U minister Thandeka is **305.8 T**. Happy (?) reading! ❖

DREAMERS Among Us

This award-winning documentary will be screened at the **Seymour Library** on **March 29** at 6:30 PM, 161 East Avenue, Brockport. Members of the Youth Group of Rural & Migrant Ministry created the film after years of fighting for the DREAM Act, capturing the pressing need for reform in immigration laws. One of the “Dreamers” featured in the film will be present for a panel discussion afterward. The event is free to the public. It is sponsored by a collaboration between *Rural & Migrant Ministry* and *Brockport Ecumenical Outreach Committee*.

First Universalist Church has supported Rural & Migrant Ministry through plate offerings. Contact Connie Valk for more information, or for transportation to the event. ❖



Book Club News



Submitted by Sarah Singal

Our book club selection for the month of March is *Breakfast With Buddha* by Roland Merullo. Roland’s writing style is a witty and joyful one. His novel certainly has an engaging writing style.

Please join us **March 20th at 12 noon** in the discussion room on the second floor. Note that the meeting will be on the third Sunday due to Easter.

All are welcome and it is not necessary to have read the book. Hopefully we will see you then.

For questions contact either

Shirley Bond at Bondshirl1@gmail.com or

Sarah Singal at ssingal@Rochester.rr.com ❖

House News, Feb. 2016

Submitted by Tom Ruganis

We live in the Rochester area for many good reasons, although the wear and tear on our structures and vehicles is not one of them. The cold weather has once again frozen the pipes to the RE wing. As with last year the water was turned off to prevent damage if the pipes did burst and when the pipes thawed no problems were experienced. Also the Church’s snow-blower is acting up and is in need of repair. And lastly the temperature changes may be at least partially responsible for the falling plaster in the Sanctuary.

Obviously, the most concerning issue is the plaster. We will do our due diligence and investigate all possible causes of the problem, including roof leaks and downspout blockage. We have obtained a quote for repairs and as this will require scaffolding, the plaster work will not be done until summer.

Other updates include:

- The storage room off the north end of the Train Club has been cleaned out and is now available for the Church’s use.
- A proposal to update and improve the signage in the Church has been received from Pierrepont Visual Graphics. The proposal is being reviewed and a recommendation will be forwarded to the Board when ready.
- Plans are being made to redo the Church and Volunteer offices, replace the Clara Barton Lounge flooring and continue with the LED replacement project. Stay Tuned.

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, Mary Vyverberg, Karen Dau, Marcy Klein, Mike VanArsdale, Michael Scott and Ed Deller. We would love to hear from you! ❖

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 10:30am Sundays

Minister | Rev. Celie Katovitch

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>.