



Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

Minister

Rev. Lane Campbell
minister@uuroc.org

Minister of Life Span Faith Development

Rev. Michelle Yates
edu@uuroc.org
(585) 310-2484

Director of Music

Brock Tjosvold
music@uuroc.org

Office Manager

Emma Barry
office@uuroc.org



**First Universalist
Church of Rochester**

150 South Clinton Ave
Rochester, NY 14604
585-546-2826
uuroc.org

Sunday Services | February 2022

February 6 | *The Purpose of Being Together*

How we gather and with whom we gather is a big part of self-definition and living life. These days, we are discerning how to gather and with whom to gather with intention. How has our gathering shifted in this time period and what has remained the same?

— Rev. Lane Campbell

February 13 | *Side with Love Sunday*

Join Unitarian Universalists from across the denomination for this Sunday service focused on the justice work we are called to by our shared principles and theology. This service will feature a variety of voices, musical offerings, stories, and songs, keeping our hearts' attentions on the call of love.

February 20 | *The Purpose of Church*

Why is it that we go to church? What brings us back here week after week or even just for this week? Why become part of a church now? Let us name what we are seeking in our definitions of church.

— Rev. Lane Campbell

February 27 | *Living with Purpose*

Some would say we each bring our own unique special gift to the task of life that only we can bring. Where do you find purpose and meaning? A service to reflect on the core values we hold and how they are shaping our lives.

— Rev. Lane Campbell

❖ **Services begin at 10:30am** ❖

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Worship will be online and possibly in-person at First Universalist Church. Check our Facebook page and website for more updated info! Please join us – Internet link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/131764422>; Phone number: 1-646-558-8656 with Meeting ID: 131 764 422. ❖



Slowing in to Purpose

Message from Rev. Lane Campbell

These days, I am spending quite a few quiet mornings at home, allowing the day to be slow, watching my cats play and jump around. I have not been feeling quick to rise and get the day started. I have been wanting to slowly move into this season of snow and cold, to allow what is to just be for a time.

In these moments, it is hard to know what my purpose is. So much of my personal sense of purpose comes from the work I do in the world, from the relationships I engage in, from what feels good when I do it. But purpose is about more than what we do, isn't it? Purpose is about finding who we are. Purpose is about finding where we click in to the world and what our role is in this grand experiment we are calling life.

I am finding when I am slowing, when I am embracing the invitation to rest, when I don't rush into the next thing, I find in the stillness a sense of who I am and where I fit in. For each of us, we have moments of clarifying experience and learning that show us a bit about our purpose in this world. If we are paying attention, we can allow our lives to speak to us about purpose. When have they come for you? What have been the life circumstances to bring about a sense of purpose in you? How has your sense of purpose been refined or clarified in these last few years? I look forward to exploring our monthly theme of purpose with you in February.

In Faith and Courage,

Rev. Lane ❖



“Who Am I?”

Message from Rev. Michelle Yates

I have a friend who teaches college freshmen. She loves giving them the first assignment; a reflection on “Who Am I?” I have told her I hated those assignments in college as I struggled to guess what the teacher wanted to hear. She tells me she assures them that this is not a trap, and that she loves the wide range of what they share.

Do you remember struggling with an assignment like this in your life?

Who are you? What is your purpose?

She tells me many students write about their families or what inspired them to become a theater major. Sometimes she gets very creative statements, poems, credos, or just fun silliness.

This year she had a student share a quote from the song “Who Am I?” from Les Misérables.

“Who am I? Can I conceal myself for evermore?

Pretend I'm not the man I was before?

*And must my name until I die be no more than an alibi?
Just kidding! I'm Taylor!”*

While this student was just being a silly theater major, I thought it was quite poignant for our theme of purpose this month. In this song, the character is really asking who he is responsible for and to, who is affected by his choices.

We have asked ourselves these questions many times over the past two years of the pandemic. Basically, how do we care for ourselves and others?

Maybe that is the heart of purpose. For whom and how do we care? How are we interconnected? And how do the answers to these questions inform our choices and journey in life?

Who are you? I promise, this is not a trap!

In Love and Care,

Rev. Michelle ❖



We Want YOU!

Submitted by Lisa Gwinner & Charlie Courtsal

Name: Charles Courtsal

Occupation: I'm a doctor, not a computer tech!

I am what is known as an "end user". My main computer talent is using software others created. If it doesn't work, I call tech support. And yet, I volunteered for the Zoom Team last summer. Why? I wanted to learn about how this computer stuff works, and I wanted to help; and I discovered that even an end user could do the job! I've been assisting since June 2021 and look forward to continuing to help out.

You can too! If you access our Zoom services via laptop or desktop computer (it doesn't work from mobile devices), and if you can copy and paste text from a document, you can volunteer as a "Grusher" (greeter/usher) for Zoom services. We particularly need help for hybrid services (when we're online and in-person). If you are a regular Zoom attendee, or are willing to occasionally attend by Zoom to help, please consider volunteering! Emma is happy to teach you and the team is ready to support you!

Sincere thanks from the Zoom Tech Team & Communications Committee! ❖

Finance News & Notes: *The Service Auction that Wasn't.....*

Submitted by Ann Rhody, Finance Chair

Ah, to wish for what might have been! Thank you for the many positive messages and affirmations after we made the difficult but necessary decision to suspend our plans for the Annual Service Auction. When we think of the Service Auction, the most essential elements are fun, fellowship, and gathering. The funds raised from the event are definitely important, but they are secondary. The Auction team (Katherine Flynn, Paula Marchese, and Ann Rhody, with help from Connie Valk) found that the harder we tried to adapt the event to current circumstances, the more we risked losing these essential elements.

The great blessing in all of this is that our fiscal year (now more than halfway through!) is going well enough that the loss of this fundraising income will not have dire consequences. And the reason that we have a solid financial footing is because YOU—our members and friends—continue to support the church with pledges, plate donations, and by showing up with your energy. Thank you!

• Planning for the Future

Believe it or not, it's time to talk about the 2022-23 budget! We already have some initiatives to consider, and church leadership has been in communication with the Finance Committee about how best to support those. If you have questions or ideas about next year's budget, or would like to work with us on creating the budget, please let us know! You can email finance@uuroc.org.

• For All That is Our Life:

Pledge Sunday is April 10

Your Stewardship team, led by Kitty Forbush and Brian Mumey, is busy planning for this year's pledge drive. See the article in this newsletter and stay tuned for how you can help our church continue to be there for us.... through ALL of life's journeys! ❖

Drop-In Discussion

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, or look on uuroc.org!

Sometimes our discussions are based on books/articles, but you don't have to do any preparation to participate. Just drop in. People of all viewpoints are welcome to make presentations or join.

February 1 | *Climate Crisis: Speed, Scale, & Options Pt. II*

We will be discussing global warming, the observed effects of this warming, and the options available to mitigate these effects, including both emissions reduction and carbon sequestration. Hosted by Jon Randall, Climate Reality Project and climate change refugee.

February 8 | *Pretty Little Lies*

In the wake of the Christmas holidays, what are some of the religious, cultural, theological and traditional "lies" that bother you? Are they Biblical mistranslations or cultural manipulations? In this new era of truth telling, what "lies" do you see getting a face lift? How could you revise a "truer" celebration? Email Rev. Michelle at edu@uuroc.org if you have ideas for our discussion, or topics you would like to know the "true" story behind.

February 15 | *In Defense of Honest Abe*

Starting soon after his death, Abraham Lincoln was regarded as the greatest American, not just by his fellow Americans, but by the world. But now there are those who seek to redefine him as a garden-variety racist. His statue has been toppled, along with those of Confederate generals. Phil Ebersole will set the record straight.

February 22 | *Open Topic*

Join us for our periodic break from a pre-determined discussion topic to allow us to relax together and share our concerns, wishes, ideas and dreams and listen thoughtfully to one another.

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

Small Group Ministry Openings: Opportunities For Connection

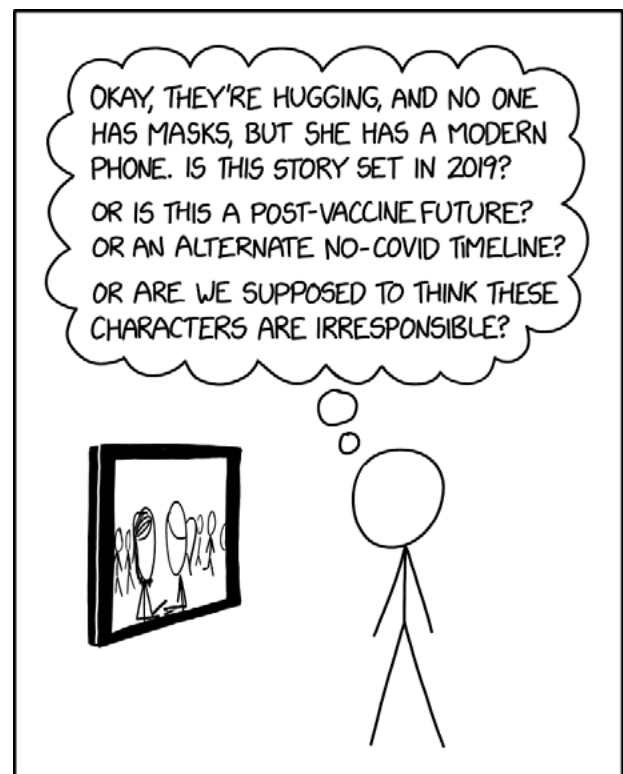
Submitted by Rev. Michelle Yates

Are you feeling disconnected? 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. Each group is led by a trained facilitator and will meet via Zoom through the winter.

Three of our Small Group Ministry groups have openings for new members starting immediately!

- Every other Monday at 1pm
- 1st and 3rd Wednesday at 7pm
- Every other Thursday at 7pm

Interested in joining a group? Take a look at the description on our website uuroc.org under the "connect" tab, complete the survey regarding your interest and availability, OR email Rev. Michelle at SGM@uuroc.org. ❖



Credit: XKCD.com

MOVIES AND SHOWS THAT ARE VAGUELY SET IN "THE PRESENT" WILL BE AWKWARD FOR A WHILE.

FPGROC (RAIHN): *Changes Ahead*

Submitted by Chris DeGolyer & Ed Deller

Because of the pandemic, churches haven't been able to shelter FPGROC families for almost two years. Instead, FPGROC has supplied apartments where temporarily homeless families stay while they search for more permanent housing. Here's the big news: rather than returning to sheltering families in churches in the future, the FPGROC board has decided to continue sheltering families in apartments. Why? Because congregations in participating churches are aging and less able to volunteer, and the apartments provide more stability for the families. However, what's missing is the emotional support and community that church volunteers gave the families.

By the time you read this, FPGROC staff will have held three town hall meetings to discuss future plans and to brainstorm about ways to continue the connection between churches and families. Although details need to be worked out, some volunteer ideas are Clean Team, Muscle Moving Team, Fixit Team, and a Caring Circle to help families transition to their permanent housing. Other suggestions were cooking a community meal at the Day Center, tutoring the children and even helping with a garden.

For at least the next six months, our church will continue to supply gift cards and food staples for families during our scheduled shelter weeks.

In 2021, FPGROC helped many more families avoid homelessness rather than sheltering them. FPGROC found that it cost an average of \$1,757 to shelter a family, compared with an average of \$748 to help a family avoid homelessness through the Prevention, Diversion, and Re-housing Program. Preventing homelessness is clearly preferred on many levels and so FPGROC is starting an ambitious Prevention Endowment Initiative to fund this program far into the future. For more information, see <https://www.fpgroc.org/prevention-endowment>.

First Universalist has hosted families at our church



for more than 15 years, touching the hearts of many families and volunteers along the way. We thank you for the care and sustenance you provided as hosts and look forward to supporting these families in a new way going forward. Kim Hunt-Uzelac, FPGROC director, wrote in a letter to churches: "If you were involved in the details of the weekly rotations at your congregation, you might take this time to reflect on a special moment with a family or a volunteer or perhaps an unexpected situation that arose. If you are new to the role or were not as involved in the rotations, perhaps you take this time to realize what an impact your congregation had on the lives of so many families sheltered and cared for within your sacred space." ❖

2022 Stewardship News

Submitted by Kitty Forbush & Brian Mumey

Dear First Universalist,

Happy New Year from your 2022-23 Stewardship Team! Our Stewardship Theme for this year is "*For All That Is Our Life*". During this pandemic era, First Universalist has continued to provide comfort and a spiritual home to our community. Through the incredible efforts of Emma, our Tech team, Ministers, Music Director, Housekeeping Team, the Committee on Ministry, the Music Committee, the Covid Task Force, and the Board, we kept the online services going and continued to care for our church. Lo and behold, in early November we got to go back into the sanctuary, safely masked, vaccinated and socially distanced for a few weeks of in-person services as well as online.

But...here we are back on Zoom...Rev. Lane, Rev. Michelle, Brock, and Emma are back creating services which keep our spiritual home vibrant and vital. This is First Universalist—we are resourceful, fluid and energetic. We could not be all that we are, in-person and online, without your loving support. To pledge your treasure each year seals our covenant and our mission to Nurture the Spirit and Serve the Community.

Sunday, April 10, will be Stewardship Sunday. There will be more information coming as we get closer to this day. You will be hearing testimonials in the next few months from members telling us why they pledge their financial support to our beautiful church. Be safe and stay well. ❖

EcoJustice:

Food Waste Prevention

Submitted by Sarah Singal

Food waste contributes significantly to our carbon footprint, and food waste reduction is a green solution to climate change that relies especially on households and individuals. That means US.

Here are eight reasons why food waste reduction is so important, taken directly from the link listed below, Food is Treasure; the website below has most if not all of the information in this list.

<https://www.cityofrochester.gov/article.aspx?id=21474848088>

- 80 billion pounds of food are thrown out each year in the United States.
- The average American family of four spends \$1,500/year on food that goes uneaten.
- Food waste is the largest component of landfill space (18% in NY). In a landfill, food waste creates methane, a greenhouse gas 28 times more potent than CO₂.
- In the United States alone, the production of lost or wasted food generates the equivalent of 37 million cars worth of GHG emissions.
- Food that is never eaten in the United States consumes 21% of all freshwater, 18% of cropland, 19% of all fertilizer, and 21% of landfill volume.
- Food waste contributes to the wasting of fresh water. Every pound of beef thrown out sends to the landfill the equivalent amount of water as 370 minutes of the shower being run, 104 minutes for every pound of chicken, 5 minutes for each tomato, 42 minutes for every pound of bananas, and 122 minutes for every pound of cheese.
- The City of Rochester is estimated to produce 29,812 tons of food (about 293 pounds per person per year), yet one in four Rochesterians is food insecure!
- Reducing food loss and waste by just 15% could feed more than 25 million people a year.

The Ecojustice Group meets the first Sunday of each month. Next meetings are Feb. 6 and Mar. 6. ❖



Small Kindnesses, Big Impacts

Submitted by Joy Leccese for FIAC

You've no doubt heard the story about the little boy who picked up starfish on the shore, and tossed them back into the ocean. Someone came along and commented that there were thousands of them, and this action would make no difference in the bigger picture. As he picked up one more starfish and tossed it gently into the waves, the boy replied that to that one starfish it made a huge difference.

And so it is with our church's mini-ministry of setting out healthy snacks in our Free Little Library cupboard. AC (Ante-Covid), people would come to the door, and our church Admin (Emma) would give out such snacks to people who asked. DC (During Covid), Emma has been preparing snacks to leave in the Library. They are always taken, and each week she refills the cupboard. We have no way of knowing how many people this serves, but we know this meets some important needs.

This practice is but a small part of the bigger picture that reflects our mission and vision: to nurture the spirit and serve the community. Sometimes a little snack goes a long way, and the message of loving kindness is not lost on those who need one. For more information on how you can be part of the ways we serve our community, contact your Faith In Action Council at FIAC@uuroc.org. Even small contributions of time and talent are welcome, and important. ❖



- It's safe, simple, and free of charge.
- It could keep you from getting COVID-19. If you still get COVID-19, it could keep you from becoming seriously ill.
- It will help you do your part to slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health of your family, your friends and your community.
- It's an mRNA vaccine. These types of vaccines have been studied for more than two decades to evaluate their safety and effectiveness.
- It's the first step toward life returning to normal.



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 on Sundays

Minister | Rev. Lane Campbell

Minister of Life Span Faith Development |
Rev. Michelle Yates

Music Director | Brock Tjosvold

Office Manager | Emma Barry

Nursery Care Providers |
Carol Williams & Sundae Hodge

Board of Trustees 2021–2022

Theresa McFarland-Porter (*President*), Eric Van Dusen (*Vice President*), Steve Munson (*Clerk*), Jillian Beaman, MJ Curry, Bridget Watts, Richard Reed, Rev. Lane Campbell (*ex-officio*)

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.