



Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY

April 2016

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Sunday Services | April 2016

April 3 | *What to Do When the World is Ending*

A sermon in honor of Earth month.

- Celie Katovitch



April 10 | *Membership Sunday*

Join us as we welcome those who have joined our community over the past year, and celebrate the covenantal tradition of which we are a part.

- Celie Katovitch



April 17 | *Stewardship Sunday*

Today we'll mark the culmination of Stewardship season with a celebration of abundance and gratitude.

- Celie Katovitch

April 24 | *TBA*



See details on page 3

Regular service begins at 10:30am





Pastor's Perspective

Message from Rev. Celie Katovitch

The Stewardship Committee has chosen a wonderful theme this year, with "Growing Together." There is such spiritual richness in this idea!

Besides the connection to be found between our care of this church, our spiritual home, and care for the Earth, our planetary home (which is even now awaking with all manner of beautiful, growing things as spring arrives), I know many of us are joyful at the growing number of new friends who have become part of the First Universalist community over the last year or two. The fullness of our Sanctuary-- full of people, full of laughter, full of energy-- is certainly a happy and invigorating reality.

At the same time, we are also growing "beyond numbers." As congregational President Ed Deller mentions in his article this month, your Board has spent time in discernment this winter, thinking, observing, and processing thoughts expressed at the fall Leadership Assembly. They have lifted up three areas with particular potential for focus and new initiatives in the coming years. (See Ed's article.) To me, these highlight several other ways in which we have been growing, and will continue to grow, as a congregation.

- 1) We are growing in connection to our larger community. This is a time to think about our mission, and how we are called to live it today, in this place and at this unique moment in time. What is ours to do? How are we called to connect-- in solidarity, in service, in outreach, or in dialogue?
- 2) We are growing in spirit-- taking advantage of new opportunities to deepen spiritual practices, UU identity, and openness to the presence of the holy.
- 3) We are growing organizationally. With numerical growth comes change, and if we are to continue living our mission fully and setting free the gifts of our members, it's good to think about our structures and whether they help us do those things at our present size. It can be a challenging topic; it can even be scary now and then-- but most of all it is hopeful: the sign that we are healthy, and that we now stand in a place where we can look confidently toward the future.

I can't wait to see all this congregation will continue to do, together.

In gratitude and faith, --Celie ❖



Walking Together:

Director of Life Span Faith Development

Submitted by Michelle Yates, DRE

Passover is Great! Passover makes me think of Moses, which reminds me of one of my very favorite Biblical themes: the "Call Narrative."

A "Call Narrative" is the part in so many biblical stories where God says something along the lines of, "Hey you, I want you to go and do this really important, scary job."

Then the person says, "You've got the wrong person."

"Nope, I'm sure I want you."

"But I'm not good enough for these reasons..."

"I am God here and I'm sure you're it."

"But I'm scared. Will you come with me?"

"Yes, I am always with you."

Then the person begins the mission God has called them to.

When have you felt "Called" to do something "important and scary?" Perhaps you felt unworthy or ill-equipped. Perhaps it would have felt easier if you had just one person doing it with you?

Calling and Courage go together well as our Faith Development theme this month. In the month of April, you may feel called to church membership, to community or political involvement, to represent our church, to care for the Earth, to help those who are homeless, or to learn about injustice so that you might work for justice in the future. You may feel "called" in ways that bring up your fears and uncertainties. It is for this reason, that we also need courage.

Courage is not a once-in-a-lifetime thing, but an everyday living thing. As Rev. B. M. Liscord says, "It is the persistent acts of courage by ordinary people over time that creates lives of meaning and purpose, and bends the arc of history toward justice."

Consider ways you can embrace "calling & courage."

-Think of a moment when your courage failed you. What can you do to honor the courage you would have had?

-When have you been surprised by your own courage? Where did it come from?

Some opportunities in our community:

-Connect with the larger UU movement at District Assembly 4/1-4/2 in Syracuse

-Passover Seder- Fri, 4/22 @ 6pm ❖

Friday, April 15th, 7:00 pm

GROWING CITIES, a documentary film about urban farming and revitalizing our cities. (97 min.)

Discussion after the movie with Sara Scott, Coordinator of Horticultural and Environmental Programming, City of Rochester.

Tuesday, April 19th, 7:00 pm

BIDDER 70, a documentary film that follows an act of civil disobedience in the name of climate justice. (73 min.)

Discussion after the movie with Dr. Susan Spencer, President and Founder at ROCSPOT, promoting solar energy use in Rochester.



EARTH WEEK

at First Universalist

150 Clinton Ave. S., Rochester, NY 14604 • (585) 546-2826

Thursday, April 21st, 6:00 pm

Presented by the *Sierra Club of Rochester Region*, hosted at First Universalist.

Keegan Kuhn, who filmed "Cowspiracy," will speak about the role of animal agriculture in climate change. A panel will also include individuals operating a successful local organic farm and representatives addressing related workers' rights issues.

Saturday, April 23rd, Noon

A brief outdoor worship service in Washington Square Park (right across the street from the church), led by John Akers and Rev. Celie. The service will include a **BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS**. This means that all furred and feathered friends are welcome (bring your human friends too!). Stuffed animals, as well as photographs showing pets of beloved memory, may also receive a blessing.

Links of interest:

Calculate your carbon footprint: www.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator

Earth week events listed by RPCC (Rochester Peoples Climate Coalition):
www.rochesterclimateaction.org/our-work/earth-week-2016/

Become a Worship Associate for the 2016–17 Church Year

The Worship Associates are a valued ministry of our church, helping to develop and deliver several elements of our Sunday service. They also schedule guest speakers and facilitate several annual lay-led services.

Please note:

We can accept 2–3 new worship associates this year.

Who is a strong candidate to be a Worship Associate?

- Someone seeking to examine and deepen his/ her faith as a Unitarian Universalist.
- Someone who loves First Universalist church, and expresses that love through consistent Sunday attendance.
- Someone who is a team player, dedicated to others and to the church's mission.
- Someone with gifts for writing and public speaking.
- Someone who is creative and adaptive.

What is required of a Worship Associate?

- Attendance on Sundays, as well as at a training retreat (usually in late August/ early September) and scheduling meetings (held quarterly).
- Timely submission of written work to the minister when delivering worship elements; discussion of your work with fellow Associates.
- Ongoing commitment to the congregation and to deepening your faith as a UU.

If you are interested in joining the team, please take time to reflect about the above commitments and qualifications, and submit a sample of written work (a meditation, brief reflection, or chalice lighting -- examples can be found in the back of the gray hymnal) to minister@uuroc.org by May 1st. Rev. Celie is happy to talk with you about any questions or concerns. ❖

Stewardship 2016

Growing Together- return your pledge card by April 17!

Submitted by Ann Rhody for the Finance Team

It's time for our annual Stewardship Campaign. If you are new to First Universalist, this is our yearly appeal to all members and friends of the congregation to pledge a level of financial support for the upcoming fiscal year (from July 2016 to June 2017). This year's theme is "Growing Together," as we hope to highlight the ways this church contributes to our own spiritual growth and we, in turn, contribute to the growth of the congregation and the wider, beloved community.

By now, you should have received a letter in the mail inviting you to pledge as well as a brochure and pledge card. If you haven't, blanks will be available in the sanctuary starting this week. Our goal for this campaign is to have ALL members -- and friends of the church, as they wish -- to pledge some level of support. If you've never pledged before, we (John, Rachael or any member of the Finance Team) would be happy to meet with you and answer any questions you have. You can also find a "Stewardship Basics" brochure in the Clara Barton Lounge on the Finance billboard. If you have pledged in the past, thank you, and please continue at whatever level your financial situation warrants and feels right to you.

Please return your pledge card any Sunday in the "Growing Together" planter in the sanctuary or by mail before Stewardship Sunday on April 7th (join us for pie that day as well after service). **This year, you also have the option to pledge online.** Just go to our website (uuroc.org) and click on the "Make Your Pledge" tab at the top of the home page. It's easy and convenient!

Your generous financial support will help provide the "fertile soil and sunlight" necessary for the seeds of our faith to grow!

John Akers, Rachael Baldanza (Stewardship Co-Chairs) & The Finance Team ❖



A car should not be a replacement for a home...



SATURDAY, APRIL 30TH - SUNDAY, MAY 1ST, 2016
5:00 PM TO 7:30 AM

ASBURY FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH,
1050 EAST AVE., ROCHESTER

Join us for an evening to raise awareness of family homelessness and a fundraiser to benefit the Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network (RAIHN). Sleep overnight in your car to experience what many families must resort to in Rochester. Similar to the idea of a walk-a-thon, participants in Car City raise a registration fee plus pledges to benefit RAIHN. See <http://www.raihn.org/car-city/> for information about how to participate.

If you don't want to sleep in your car but you want to participate in the effort, you can simply donate to Team VirtUUal! See accompanying article.

Evening Program:

- Local photojournalist **Arleen Thaler** will speak about her recent article about hunger and poverty in Rochester - <http://postrochester.com/domino-effect/>
 - Car-a-oke with Creekside Entertainment
 - Art Installation - See Me - by Michael Leonard, featuring RAIHN graduates
 - Games and prizes
 - Dinner and a light breakfast
 - Sundae bar
 - Bedtime Yoga with Yoga DrishTi
 - T-Shirts for participants who raise a minimum of \$50
- ...and an experience you won't forget! ❖

Join Team VirtUUal!

Keeping families together

Getting families home for good.



You don't have to sleep in your car overnight on April 1st in order to support RAIHN Car City 2016! I can't be there myself, so I have created Team VirtUUal as a way for me and others to "participate" in raising funds and awareness of family homelessness from home.

Here's how:

You can participate by donating to my Team VirtUUal on line:



Go directly to the **Team VirtUUal** page by copying and pasting on this link - <http://familypromise.donordrive.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.search&filter=participant&ventID=721&searchTerm=Team+VirtUUal> - and click on the Donate Now button.

- or -



Go to www.raihn.org.

- Click on the Car City logo on the right side of the page.
- Click on the Donate To This Event box.
- Enter Team VirtUUal or Marti Eggers in the Search Box.
- Click on Search.
- Click on Donate Now!

The rest is up to you. A donation in any amount, large or small, will be gratefully received and will help get families home for good.

Thank you!
Marti Eggers



Living Our Values, Making A Difference

Submitted by Newcomb Losh, Communications Committee

Reducing Racism – Feb. 28, 2016

Suzie Syta Gutierrez participates in One News Story 4 Ways exercise as (l to r) **Beth Ares, Kitty Forbush, Jon Greenbaum, Martha Welch** and at least 20 others listen in the Reducing Racism event held in our sanctuary on Feb. 28. Jon, the Lead Organizer from Roc/ACTS, also led a discussion of *Harvard's Project Implicit: Race Association Task* which attendees were encouraged to complete in advance.



Photographer: Ed Deller



Adult RE – UU History – March 3, 2016

Our Director of Lifespan Faith Development, **Michelle George Yates**, leads members and friends in a UU history class focusing on the merger of the Unitarian and Universalist churches in 1961 and the 50 years that followed. Left to right are: **Richard Reed, Connie Valk, Christine DeGolyer, Michelle,** and **Katherine Flynn.**



UUnAMOR at REACH Home – March 16, 2016

Our newly-formed social justice group Unitarian/Universalist Animal Ministries of Rochester NY (UUnAMOR) prepared and served dinner to REACH Home residents on March 16. Pictured above are (l to r): **Lois Baum, Greg Baum** and **Daryl Odhner**. Right photo: **Janet Clarke-Hazlett**.



Photographer: unnamed resident of REACH Home

Adult Religious Education

Submitted by Michelle Yates

UU History

Thursday April 7th, 1:30–3:30pm - Part 6

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

We will watch the hour long video 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 even if you haven't attended before. This is our very recent history as a denomination, and is helpful for everyone to know to better understand the UUA today.

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

Childcare available if requested a week in advance.

Beginning Meditation Practice

Submitted by Kathy Russell



A Beginning Meditation Practice will take place in the rear of the sanctuary each Wednesday from 5:15-6:30pm. This 10 week session began on March 23rd and extends through May 25th. It is not necessary to attend all sessions - come when you can. No experience needed. Punctuality is appreciated as the church doors will be locked at 5:20. 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 Wednesdays. ❖

Vector graphic-Freepik

All photographs by Newcomb Losh unless otherwise noted.

School 7 Tutoring – March 23, 2016

Bill Elwell, one of the tutoring volunteers from our congregation, guides 2nd graders in reading and other schoolwork at Virgil I. Grissom School 7. In his interactions with students, he promotes the inherent worth and dignity of every person and the acceptance of one another. Clockwise from top: Mr. Elwell, Nahriel Figgins, Nikolas NanVoorhis, Ayaina Colbert, Miguel Lora and Cejay Torres.

Photographer: Ed Deller



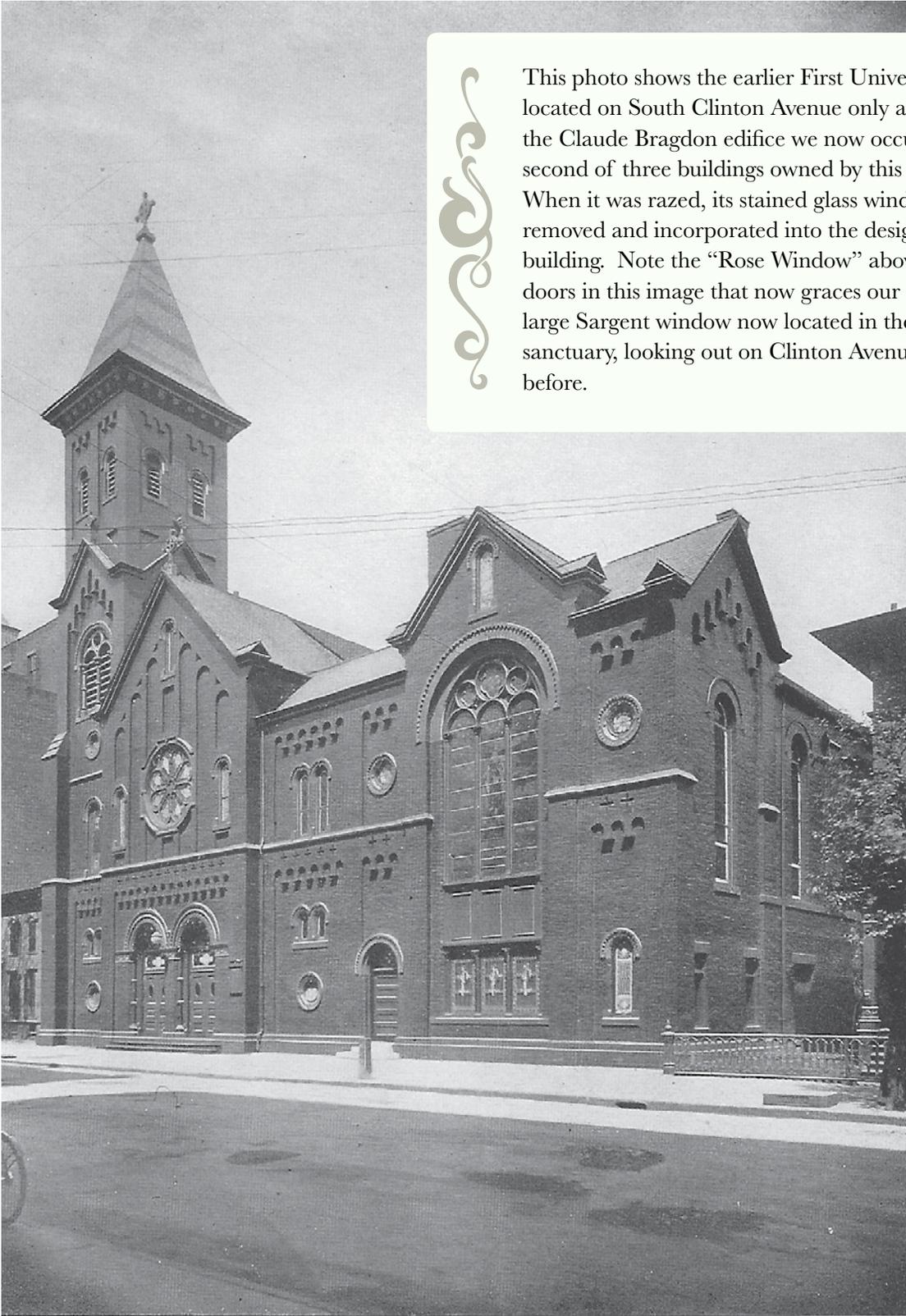
Chili Cook-off – March 13, 2016

Bill Elwell (right) added spice to our Sunday coffee hour by hosting our annual chili cook-off on March 13. Members and friends voted on their favorite chilis cooked by four chefs. Here, Bill congratulates the winner, **Newcomb Losh**, who used former long-time First Universalist member Janet Perregaux's recipe from Recipes for a RAIHNY Day cookbook. ❖

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.

Auld Lang Syne

Submitted by Karen Dau, archivist



This photo shows the earlier First Universalist Church, located on South Clinton Avenue only a block from the Claude Bragdon edifice we now occupy. It was the second of three buildings owned by this congregation. When it was razed, its stained glass windows were removed and incorporated into the design of this building. Note the “Rose Window” above the double doors in this image that now graces our ceiling, and the large Sargent window now located in the back of our sanctuary, looking out on Clinton Avenue as it did once before.



**EARLIER CHURCH BUILDING
FIRST UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF ROCHESTER
PHOTO A.B.T. 1901**

WHEN THIS congregation was founded in 1846, it was part of what later became known as The Burned Over District. The term Burned Over District was used as early as 1845 to describe the area of upstate New York beginning in western New York and following roughly along the Erie Canal to the Adirondacks and southeast to the Catskills. In 1950 Whitney R. Cross published an influential history of religion in this section during the first half of the 19th century with the first-mentioned title. “Upon this broad belt of land,” wrote Mr. Cross, “congregated a people extraordinarily given to unusual religious beliefs, peculiarly devoted to crusades aimed at the perfection of mankind [sic] and the attainment of millennial happiness.” The thriving and detested followers of Universalism had a powerful role to play during this time of spiritual upheaval, as their theology called for universal salvation and rejected any belief in hell. Their more liberal stance on theology provided encouragement to those who were seeking more moderate expressions of religious faith. At the same time, their sometimes violent opposition to the prevalent religious enthusiasm aggravated its practitioners to even greater missionary zeal and persecution of their opposers. In Rochester, a loyal and determined band of Universalists struggled to survive during this era. The pre-eminent 19th century revivalist Charles Grandison Finney had spent six months in Rochester in 1830 at what was the high point of his career, and a string of revivalists had succeeded him all through the decade.

There were so many revivals during and after his residence here that the editor of a Universalist newsletter in Utica wrote in 1833, “How many times more, we would ask, is this unfortunate village destined to be scarred over with... Finneyism and all other kinds of fanaticisms that have brought reproach on the name and cause of Christianity? What have the citizens of Rochester done, that they should be singled out... above all people on the face of this earth?” While the Universalist faithful in Rochester found religious tolerance extremely difficult to practice on account of Finney’s revivals and their aftermath, they were not alone in this regard, and few of the Universalist congregations across the Burned Over District during this time escaped some level of oppression from religious zealotry. They did not accept this intolerance passively, however. Their papers of the time were often rife with lurid accounts of suicide and murder—complete with names and locations—committed by individuals crazed with notions of their inherent unworthiness, and by parents who maimed or even killed their children in a tragically misguided effort to save them from hell. Their papers called for an end to these kinds of horrors perpetrated in the name of God. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,” the Universalists preached, taking this theology from the very same Bible used by every other branch of Christianity. And in the end, revivalism and millennialism in the Burned Over District fell victim to their own excesses. ❖



1855 map showing a rough outline of The Burned Over District in western NY.

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.

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 strengthen access to reproductive medicine. In addition, she will give a brief overview of recent legislative activity and goals for 2016.

April 10 | *The Secret*

Hank Stone will discuss Rhonda Byrne's book *The Secret*, which gives you a way to "have, do, or be anything you want." At this Drop-in, the "secret" will be revealed!

April 17 | *Presidential Primary*

Who should win the New York presidential primaries? Who will win? Phil Ebersole will lead a discussion.

April 24 | *Christian Socialism*

With all the talk of the U.S. being a "Christian nation" and with Bernie Sanders running for president under the banner of "Democratic Socialist," it's time to discuss what this means. David Damico will lead a discussion on the late 19th century progressive movement known as Christian Socialism based on the book, *What is Christian Socialism*, written by Rev. W.D.P. Bliss, Congregationalist minister, 1886, which, incidentally, aligns nicely with modern tenets of Universalism. Francis Bellamy of Mt. Morris, who wrote the Pledge of Allegiance in 1892, is a notable figure in the movement.

May 1 | *Life of a UU Chaplain*

Come hear from Rev. Sarah Gillespie, our affiliated community minister, about what's it's like to be a hospital chaplain and a UU minister. Bring your questions about community ministry, chaplaincy, and more to this open conversation.

May 8 | *South Africa Revisited*

Twenty or so years ago, the Rev. Richard Gilbert visited South Africa with a delegation of ministers investigating

the white minority government's policies of apartheid. In April, he revisited the country, now ruled by members of the black majority, and he will discuss what he saw.

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, obtain contact information and speak to Phil Ebersole. ✦

Book Club News



Submitted by Sarah Singal

The April selection is *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration In The Age Of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander. This former UU Common Read shows how an under caste has been created in the criminal justice system and argues that "colorblindness" and even affirmative action help to perpetuate it.

The book group will meet at 12 noon on April 24th in the adult discussion lounge on the second floor. All are welcome and it is not necessary to have read the book.

For questions, contact either

Shirley Bond at Bondshirl1@gmail.com or

Sarah Singal at ssingal@Rochester.rr.com ✦



News

Submitted by Keith Stott

Time Passes

How soon did you start taking aging seriously? Not yet? Or, for several years? Some of us – nineteen, mostly UU ministers, including our very own Richard Gilbert – were asked by Kathleen Montgomery to write about their experiences of aging and how those experiences "intersected with their spiritual lives and their sense of meaning." As you journey along the winding road of aging will you find great companions while you read *Landscapes of Aging and Spirituality*, edited by Kathleen Montgomery. Call number is **242.65 M**. Also, you can call for companions in our congregation. There will be responses. ✦

House News April 2016

Submitted by Tom Ruganis

It is officially spring so that means the **semi-annual cleanup** day isn't far away. The date selected by the house committee is Saturday **May 7th**. Please let the house committee know of any cleaning or small repairs that you think should be addressed. If you would like to lend a hand with cleaning, minor repairs or smoke alarm/emergency lighting checks, please let us know or just show up! Morning snacks and a light lunch will be provided.

Other updates include:

- By the time this hits your mailbox the burned out light in the sanctuary theater lighting system will have been replaced.
- Work also has continued on the various projects currently under review. These include updating of the building's signage, sanctuary plaster repairs, updating the Church and Volunteer offices, replacing the Clara Barton Lounge flooring, replacing lights with LED bulbs where feasible, and permanently installing the garden benches.
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, Marty Vyverberg, Karen Dau, Marcy Klein, Mike VanArsdale, Michael Scott and Ed Deller.
We would love to hear from you! ❖



Great News for Social Justice Plate Committee

Submitted by Shirley Bond

The Social Justice Plate Committee is so pleased to announce that the collection for ROC ACTS for the month of January amounted to \$292.00! For Metro Justice the total was \$429.00!

People will often admit there is a need, but then creatively avoid dealing with it. Not our congregation! We collectively work together. The whole congregation gets a pat on the back for their contribution.

One more thing: Our collection for the month of April will be spearheaded for 'Mothers Out Front'. This organization trains leaders to build relationships with elected officials to understand the dangers of climate change. Time to do something about it!

Thanks again. Shirley Bond, Becky Elwell, Sarah Singal, Marcia Weaver ❖

Garden lovers

Submitted by Sarah Singal

If green things growing speak to you of the interdependent web of all existence, join like-minded souls in the Garden Committee. We plant, water, harvest and thoroughly enjoy the flower and vegetable gardens at church.

See Sarah Singal or email ssingal@rochester.rr.com. ❖



The LUUnch BUUnch April, 2016

12:30, Sunday
April 3rd.

*Napa Wood
Fired Pizza,*
573 South Clinton Ave.



Suggestions on restaurants?
Contact Joyce Gilbert at JTGilbert@frontiernet.net.

Designed by Freepik

News from Your Board

Submitted by Ed Deller

The First Universalist board has had a productive church year so far and we want to share some recent fruits of our labor. At the church Leadership Assembly last fall two significant actions were taken by the board: 1) to shore up our committee descriptions and 2) to create long term vision priorities to help guide our actions. Good progress has been made on both. The committee descriptions are mostly done.

Vision Priorities:

At our March meeting the board voted on the following long term priorities, distilled from the many inputs at the Leadership Assembly and also building on the Love Reaches Out project from last year:

- Build visibility of 1st Universalist with diverse groups in the Rochester community.
 - Build our connections to diverse groups to promote better mutual understanding
 - Spread awareness of our beliefs
 - Live our values in relevant ways
- Increase opportunities for spiritual/soul growth.
- Nurture new, inclusive leadership.

Next steps in this process will be to create action plans to support the priorities.

SLD/CERG

The board voted unanimously at its March meeting to support the proposal to dissolve the St. Lawrence District (SLD) in favor of the Central East Regional Group (CERG) structure. Practical impacts to our church are expected to be minor, but net positive, especially for supporting resource availability. Nancy Gaede and Ed Deller were approved as delegates to the District Assembly to represent this position.

Panhandler Policy

From time to time panhandlers come to the church asking for money, food, or other items. Church members and friends are sometimes confused about how best to interact with these guests. After research and discussion, the board has approved the following policy for this situation:

As a downtown church, First Universalist will from time to time be visited by people in need of food, shelter or other care. We will treat them consistent with the church's mission to serve the community and our first UU Principle which tells us to respect the dignity of all. To that end, unless there is a safety concern, we will welcome them for food or fellowship. We will provide suggestions for nearby shelters, food pantries or other care facilities. However, members and friends are discouraged from giving money directly.

As always, please feel free to ask any board member for more details about these items or other board related activities. The board minutes are available to church members and friends and can be found at the Board of Trustees section of the bulletin board in the Clara Barton Lounge. ✚