



Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

MINISTER

Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell
minister@uuroc.org

MINISTER OF LIFESPAN

FAITH DEVELOPMENT
Rev. Michelle Yates
edu@uuroc.org

CO-DIRECTORS OF MUSIC

Dr. Brock Tjosvold
brock@uuroc.org
Dr. Claudio Espejo
claudio@uuroc.org

OFFICE MANAGER

Mx. Emma Barry
office@uuroc.org



First Universalist
Church of Rochester

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

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Sunday Services | October 2026

October 4 | *Whose Bones Do We Carry?*

Our ancestors—familial and spiritual—have given us so much that we still carry. Which inheritances feel like gifts? And which feel like heavy baggage?

— *Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell*

October 11 | *We've Only Just Begun*

In an age of instant everything, what does it mean to be new at something? Against the tide of urgency, how might our ways of the past anchor us as beginners?

— *Meghan Garvey*

October 18 | *Creation Unfolding*

The stories we carry about how things came to be are always stories about who we are right now. Our origin stories are always pointing to an ever-springing fount of creation.

— *Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell*

October 25 | *Inside That Monster*

What do we carry underneath all the costumery and artifice we put on? Who are we under what we show the world? And how do we get to what's real?

— *Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell*

❖ **Services begin at 10:30am** ❖

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



Letting Go

*A Message from
Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell*

Dear Ones,

Every year, October teaches us how to let go. We get to watch the world light up in a dazzling display of vibrance and life. Then we watch the trees let go of it all. We get to learn from them as they push all their energy inward, down into the quiet of the soil. We get to learn from the earth as its cycles slow and days darken.

It is no wonder that this is the time of year we choose to honor our beloved dead.

The first Sunday in November, 11/1/26, marks our annual Remembrance Sunday. It is a time to come together to grieve, to remember those who have died, and to mark the universal experience of loss. Each year at this time, we honor our promise to hold one another in all our joys and all our sorrows.

We are working on a beautiful sung litany of names of those who have died. If you have a loved one who has died, especially in the past year, whose name you would like included, would you please send it to Rev. Eileen at minister@uuroc.org?

We will be compiling a list of names for this litany and for an insert in the order of service. **Please send all names before 3pm on Monday, October 26, so that we can ensure they will be included in this important service.**

Everyone is invited to bring a photo or a memento of a loved one to place on our shared altar at the front of the Sanctuary on November 1.

We look forward to sharing this truly important and timely ritual with you at the end of the month.

With Care,

Rev. Eileen ❖



Love at the Center

*A Message from
Rev. Michelle Yates*

I've often struggled with deciding between several good options, particularly program options to offer here at First Universalist. There is so much good stuff to learn, explore, and talk about! I frequently look at our church and program mission statements ("To Nurture the Spirit, and Serve the Community" and "To Share the Love and Grace of Unitarian Universalism" respectively) to guide my choices.

With the launching of the UU values statements and this year's Common Read, I'm feeling like the frame of "(Is) Love at the Center?" is another way to guide my understanding of our faith, program options, and the life I want to live into.

The Common Read for this church year is "*Love at the Center: Unitarian Universalist Theologies*," essays edited by Sofia Betancourt, current *Unitarian Universalist Association* president.

Usually the UUA puts out a 3-5 session book discussion guide, but this year they have so much more!

- Five-session lifespan curriculum series ages 7+
- Committee-specific discussion guides
- Essay-specific discussion guides & suggested uses
- Worship quotes and readings
- *The Mystery of the Slightly Sentient Chalice*, a printable intergenerational mystery game

I am already using some of the resources in Children's Worship, and I'm looking into using the mystery game at our *Puzzles and Pumpkins* event on October 29, but I know there are those of you who like to dig deep into theology and related Unitarian Universalist topics.

I think the reason the Unitarian Universalist Association has put so much into this particular Common Read is because THIS IS the cutting edge of our faith theology language and exploration. I want your thoughts on which of these ways to explore this material you are most interested in.

Yours in the Journey,

Rev. Michelle ❖



October Social Justice Plate: *Person Centered Housing Options*

Submitted by Emma Barry, Office Manager

Our October Social Justice Plate Offering is designated for **Person Centered Housing Options**.

Person Centered Housing Options (PCHO) is a not-for-profit organization that adopts a housing-centered, person-centered approach, which holds that individuals who are homeless must first gain access to permanent, safe places to live before stabilizing their lifestyle, improving their health, addressing harmful behaviors, and finding and maintaining jobs.

Please give what you can in support. Thank you! For more information, visit pcho.org. ❖

Upcoming Rest: *Staff Time Away*

Submitted by Emma Barry, Office Manager

In the spirit of loving community, we share these dates so we may hold our staff in care while they are away and joyfully welcome them upon their return!

- Rev. Michelle Yates: *Sunday, Oct. 4*
- Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell:
 - *Monday, Oct. 19 to Wednesday, Oct. 21*
 - *Thursday, Oct. 29*
- Justin Wilson: *Wednesday, Nov. 4*
- Emma Barry: *Wednesday, Nov. 4*

Staff members, please email office@uuroc.org with dates of upcoming scheduled absences so we can update this space and respect your time away! ❖



The Company We Keep

A Message from Meghan Garvey, Ministerial Intern

My newest beloveds,

In the words proclaimed during our Water Communion, “We shall be known by the company we keep”. How lucky am I that this is the company I get to keep!

It is my great honor to join you as your 2026-2028 Ministerial Intern. What exactly is a Ministerial Intern, you ask? Great question!

In our tradition, those called to ministry set out on a multi-year training process which includes:

- A Master of Divinity degree, which I'm currently working on remotely through Meadville Lombard Theological School.
- Clinical Pastoral Education (spiritual care training) in a hospital or other care setting, which I completed nearby at St. John's Home in 2025.
- A Ministerial Internship, in which one serves as a student minister, under a seasoned minister, in a congregation eager to support a forming UU leader.

It is the goal that, after two years of part-time ministry here, I will successfully complete an interview with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee and be prepared to serve other congregations as an ordained UU minister.

In effect, you and I enter here into a relationship of transformation, First Universalist; one in which both parties will leave changed. In doing so, we are making a bet on one another. A well-educated, hopeful bet on the alchemy of relationship; that we will grow together, for the better, over all that unfolds in this chapter. May that be so!

As our time together moves forward, please don't be a stranger! Feel free to stop me to chat or drop me a line. You can even ask me for a blessing or prayer on the spot! However we come to know each other, I look forward to learning about you, from you, and with you.

In Faith,

Meghan ❖

Drop-In Discussion

Submitted by John Lukes

Drop-in discussions are held Tuesdays from 6:30-7:30pm via Zoom, and in-person on the first Sunday of the month in the Chalice Room (#23) at 9:15am. Phil Ebersole is the contact for in-person discussions. Look on uuroc.org/drop-in-discussions for the link!

Sunday, Oct. 4 | The Tarot: A Mirror Not a Crystal Ball *In-person*

In times of uncertainty and fear, we may long for a crystal ball to tell us what comes next. But perhaps a mirror is more useful. Join Joy Leccese for a lively exploration of Tarot—not as fortune-telling, but as a centuries-old collection of images that has become intertwined with religion, spirituality, astrology, Kabbalah, and other wisdom traditions. What might these enduring symbols teach us about how human beings seek meaning—and grounding—in times of chaos? Joy Leccese will lead a discussion.

Oct. 6 | What We Carry

The theme for this season is “What We Carry” and Rev. Eileen will lead us through one or more of the activities in our shared Spiritual Deepening Packet for the season. We hope you will join us!

Oct. 13 | Open Topic

Let’s have another open topic discussion tonight. Open topic evenings are often interesting and encouraging! And we can be supportive and encouraging towards one another, if nothing else. John Lukes will moderate our discussion.

Oct. 20 | If You Were President...?

If you were President, what specific things would you do (or refrain from doing) for the good of the nation and world? What criterion would a Presidential candidate have to fulfill in order to get your vote? Let’s have a discussion of issues and not personalities. Phil Ebersole will facilitate.

Oct. 27 | Whose Side Are We On?

Tonight we’ll watch Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell’s sermon from May 3, 2026. Here’s what Rev. Eileen wrote about this sermon: *“Ours is a faith that might make us reluctant to take sides, but should we? Whose side are we on, and who, exactly, should we be in solidarity with?”* John Lukes will moderate our discussion. Have a topic for us? Contact our team with your proposal at DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org. ❖



Settled Ministry Task Force: Next Steps

Submitted by Ann Rhody for Settled Ministry Task Force

Thanks to all who shared their thoughts about whether to call Rev. Eileen Casey Campbell to be our next Settled Minister! If you are reading this before October 5, our survey is still available, and our final listening sessions are after the Sunday service on October 4.

Our team will now assemble the survey results, as well as the feedback we got at the listening sessions. We’ll use that information to make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees prior to the end of October. Watch for information about a possible congregational vote sometime in November. Email settledministryteam@uuroc.org to connect! ❖



September New Member Sunday: Welcoming Five New Members!

Submitted by Justin Wilson & Emma Barry



First Universalist was thrilled to welcome new members (left to right) Barb Clark, Andy Poshadel, and (not pictured) Jonathan Creppel, Skylar (Sky) Morningstar, and Jonathan Lemieu to our congregation at our New Member Ceremony on September 27!





Fundraiser Event: A (totally fictional) Ghost Tour of First Universalist

Submitted by Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell

Reserve your spot for this spooky fundraiser event on Friday, October 23, at 7pm! The suggested donation per participant is a sliding scale of \$10-25. Reserve your spot here: tinyurl.com/5by5wx35!

Note: event is meant for older teens and adults.

To volunteer, please contact minister@uuroc.org. ❖



Puzzles & Pumpkins!

Submitted by Justin Wilson, Congregational Life Coord.

Puzzles & Pumpkins is back this year! Thursday October 29, from 6-8pm. Free to attend, and open to all ages.

Just like last year, there will be free food & drinks (including vegan & gluten-free options) – no need to bring anything.

Of course there will be pumpkin decorating and

other crafts for you to make and take home! We will again have a puzzle swap. Bring back ones you took home last year, bring in new ones, or just enjoy our community's abundance—just make sure to offer only 'complete' puzzles.

Lastly, we have a spooky new haunted hallway on our second floor. No jump scares, but will contain fake spiders. Bring a friend or a neighbor to this spine-tingling family Halloween event! ❖



Harvesting History

Submitted by Justin Wilson, Congregational Life Coord.

Fall brings about many joys and tasks: the smell of baked goods, the chill in the air signaling winter and even snow are just around the corner, and, for many in our farmland region, the time for harvest.

We are embarking on a bold effort of harvest ourselves: harvesting the history, voices, experiences, and love found in our congregation. It is a project to record the oral and written history of our members.

We are lucky to have congregants who have been members for decades, who have children and parents that are or were members, who are part of a multi-generation gospel of Unitarian Universalism. Perhaps now more than ever, we need to capture and share that experience, that wisdom, that story of love at the center of our spiritual journey.

Whether you just became a member or joined before our current membership book's records, your voice and your experience are valued.

Are you interested in sharing your story? Please reach out to Justin Wilson (conglife@uuroc.org), Congregational Life Coordinator, for more details. ❖



Queer Corner: *Every Day Is Halloween (If you're out)*

Submitted by Willow Shirtz

I recall one Halloween in particular when I was around 12. I didn't think about it much at the time, between my age and trans issues being less prominent in the 90's, but one of my friends dressed up as a girl for Halloween, and even went to our church Halloween party with us that year. Given that the congregation I was raised in was profoundly conservative, the non-reaction of everyone there would be impressive by modern standards. Again, I must emphasize that in the 90's, mainstream culture wasn't as aware of trans issues, therefore "girl" was just something you could be for Halloween when you were 12.

To contrast; my partner reminds me of an interaction that I had with my mother well into my adulthood. I mentioned that I wanted to wear some nail polish soon, and my mom said "Maybe for Halloween." I said, "Maybe every day."

I bring this up because, like so many people in my generation, Halloween is my favorite holiday. What's not to like? Dress up as outrageously/fabulously/sexily as you like, free candy, and fun parties!

From a LGBTQIA+ perspective what makes Halloween so special is that it's a celebration of the transgressive. It's the holiday where the monsters, ghouls, vampires, ghosts, aliens, typically the villains of any scary story, are the heroes, the protagonists, the main event.

With how often queer representation in the media is pushed into the antagonist role this is a big deal. With how often protagonists in fiction are protectors of the status quo, and the queer-coded villains are the ones pushing for some kind of societal change, having a day where you can dress up as Maleficent, Ursula, or Lestat (and be praised for it) is a big deal.

My lack of knowledge of my friend's gender exploration when we were both 12 is reflective of any kind of queer gender identity on his part. We fell out of contact years ago, and last I checked he was cis. But that's not bad! Cis people should be able to explore gender too, and the fact that cis kids could just dress

up as a "girl" or a "boy" for Halloween in the 90's surely led to some trans youth awakenings.

Wouldn't it be nice if everyday were Halloween? That's the experience I've had since coming out as non-binary. Each day I decide to what extent I'm going to violate gender norms. Often enough that leads me to getting the same kind of feedback on my outfits as I would get on a Halloween costume. I love it!

As you prepare for spooky season, I'd like for you to reflect on the words of this "hymn," *Every Day is Halloween*, by Ministry.

Well anytime, any place, anywhere that I go

All the people seem to stop and stare

They say, "Why are you dressed like it's Halloween?"

"You look so absurd, you look so obscene!"

Oh, why can't I live a life for me?

Why should I take the abuse that's served?

Why can't they see they're just like me?

It's the same, it's the same in the whole wide world

Well, I let their teeny minds think

That they're dealing with someone who is over the brink

And I dress this way just to keep them at bay

'Cause Halloween is every day, hey

It's every day, hey. ❖



Fun fact! The cartoon short used in a popular fan video of this song by Ministry, "Hells Bells," a 1929 silly symphony, is entirely within the public domain, as the cutoff for public domain is currently 1931.



Coffee Hour

Submitted by Angelina Bell

Fellowship during Coffee Hour is something we all look forward to. Our vision is “Coffee Hour for the congregation by the congregation”. We want to thank so many of you who stepped up and volunteered. We have a special team of coffee makers, a cleanup crew that will rotate every eight weeks, a team of “hosts” that will help things run smoothly each Sunday, and our special team of “foodies” who generously contribute delicious treats.

- Oct. 4– All those celebrating a special occasion in October are welcome to write their name and celebration event on our October celebration poster created by Kitty Forbush. We will provide cupcakes for all!
- Oct. 11– Theme: Harvest abundance. Bring your favorite harvest treat to share (with a list of ingredients)!
- Oct. 18– Each month, a group or committee will sponsor coffee hour. Big shout-out to LGBTQ+ for sponsoring our Sept. 20 Coffee Hour. And thank you to the choir for their support in sponsoring our October Coffee Hour.
- Oct. 25– Potluck! Bring a dish to share (with a list of ingredients).

For those who have wondered, we will no longer be setting out a cash donation box. There are many ways we appreciate your participation.

• Personal coffee mugs: In an effort to create an atmosphere of inclusion, we will no longer be housing personal coffee mugs at church. We have set up a table with all the coffee mugs that were in the cabinet. We are asking members and friends to please claim their mug and take it home. Our table will be set up until November 1. On November 8, you are free to take home any unclaimed mugs. We have plenty of church mugs for all!

If you would like to be part of our fun Coffee Hour team, or have any questions, please get in touch with a Coffee Hour team member: Sue Keefe, Molly Bell, or Angelina Bell! ♦



Fall Cleanup Day: Sat. Oct. 31, 9am-12pm

Submitted by Sarah Singal, for the House Committee

The House Committee cordially invites you to join them for a morning of preparing the church building for the cold weather, along with some deep cleaning and a lot of camaraderie! October 31, 9am-12pm. Favorite snacks included! ♦



Credit: xkcd.com



Finance: *Legacy Giving*

Submitted by Ann Rhody, for the Finance Committee

In a recent *Outlook* article our Finance Chair, Brian Mumey, expressed gratitude for many things—pledges, budget development, and more.

But this paragraph stood out to me:

“Gratitude to those church members who are no longer with us and had the foresight to include First Universalist in their estate plans. We would not be able to meet the current financial needs of the church without their generous contributions.”

It is easy to overlook the importance of bequests when we are trying to pass budgets, make our pledge, do our committee work, bring food for Coffee Hour, and such. The church DOES thrive on what so many of us do each day and each week!

But we ALSO thrive because of those who came before us. As someone who has been a church member for about 40 years, and been involved with church finance for more than half of that time, I can easily see how each bequest got us a little closer to that ability to thrive—to operate the church without white-knuckling every minor financial hiccup, including broken pipes, vandalism, and such.

So if you feel called to give for some special purpose, the FIRST question to ask yourself: HAVE I included the church in my will or estate plan?

Including the church in your estate plans isn't just for those who are wealthy, and the planning can take many forms. Many of us have done it, and it's a good feeling to know that we'll be helping the church into the future, as those who have come before have done for all of us. Please ask me, Jim Milch, or Brian Mumey for details or email finance@uuroc.org to connect! ❖

Summer Music: *Thank You!*

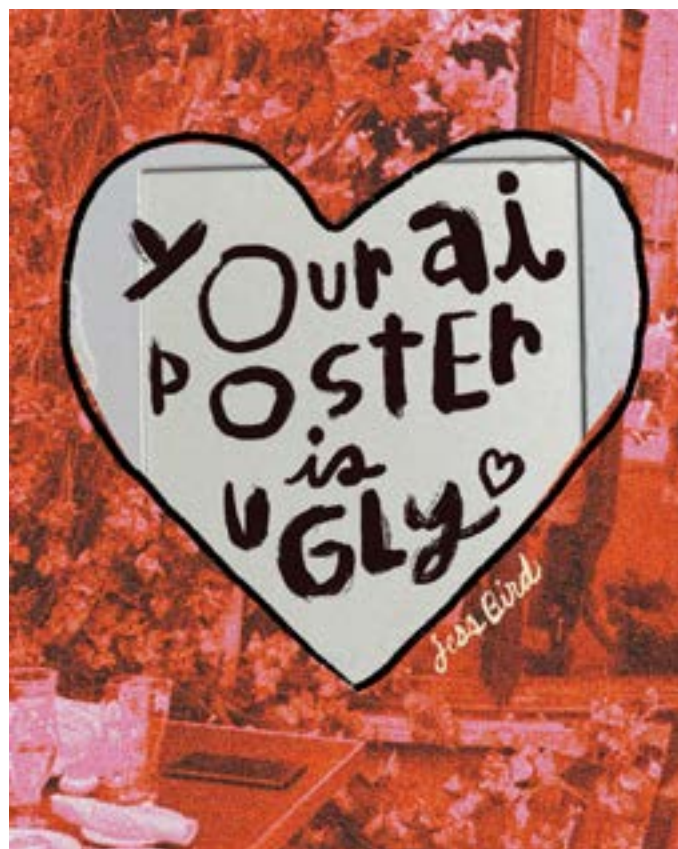
Submitted by Ann Rhody



A huge THANK YOU to all those who donated their time and talent to serve as our 2026 summer musicians!

Richard Reed, Lew Ward-Baker, Theo Munson, Charles Courtsal, Lisa Gwinner, Ed Deller, Kitty Forbush, Molly Bell, David Coon, Andy Poshadel, John Akers, and Howard Spindler provided thoughtful and varied music to feed our souls this summer.

We are indeed lucky to have such skilled and generous folks in our congregation. It was a joy to be the music coordinator this summer! ❖



EcoJustice: Vote for Planet Earth this November!



Submitted by Sarah Singal

It's October and it's time to get out the environmental vote. Here are just 3 items of interest, in no particular order. Some suggestions: If you have relatives and friends who favor a sustainable planet and environmental safeguards, ask if they have registered to vote and help whoever needs help. Encourage early voting. Offer to take non-drivers to the polls.

1. League of Conservation Voters. Find out a scorecard number for various elected officials for the year 2025 at [lcv.org/congressional-scorecard](https://www.lcv.org/congressional-scorecard).

2. League of Women Voters. See what's on your ballot, register to vote, check your registration status, and much more at [vote411.org](https://www.vote411.org)!

3. Environmental Voter Project. They identify inactive environmentalists and transform them into consistent voters to build the power of the environmental movement. Opportunities for canvassing, phone banking, and postcard writing at [environmentalvoter.org](https://www.environmentalvoter.org).

"We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children." ♦



Book Club: Sunday, November 29, at noon!

Submitted by Justin Wilson, Congregational Life Coord.

First Universalist Book Club meets when there is a 5th Sunday in a month. Join us at noon in the Chalice Room (#23) to discuss International Best Seller, *The Trouble with Goats and Sheep* by Joanna Cannon.

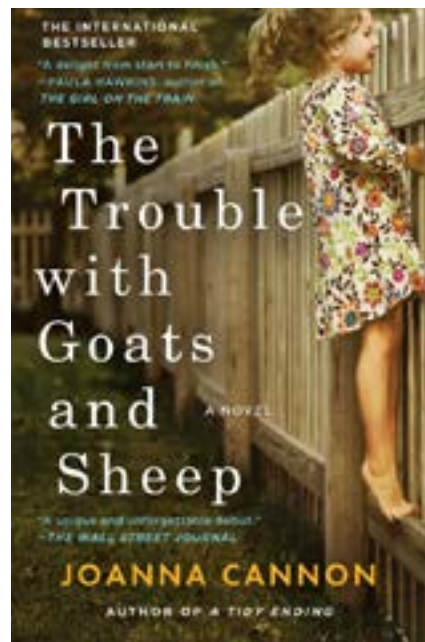
"I loved this book. It's one of those books that you just want to give to everybody."

—Nancy Pearl on NPR's *Morning Edition*

From the author's website: England, 1976. Mrs. Creasy is missing and the Avenue is alive with whispers. The neighbors blame her sudden disappearance on the heat wave, but ten-year-olds Grace and Tilly aren't convinced. As the summer shimmers endlessly on, the girls decide to take matters into their own hands. Inspired by the local vicar, they go looking for God—they believe that if they find Him they might also find Mrs. Creasy and bring her home.

Spunky, spirited Grace and quiet, thoughtful Tilly go door to door in search of clues. The cul-de-sac starts to give up its secrets, and the amateur detectives uncover much more than ever imagined. As they try to make sense of what they've seen and heard, a complicated history of deception begins to emerge. Everyone on the Avenue has something to hide, a reason for not fitting in.

All are invited to attend—prior reading not required. Join us on November 29 to help pick the next selection for our Book Club on January 31, 2027! We hope to see you there! ♦



House Committee News!

Submitted by Marcy Klein, for the House Committee

The House Committee and Welcome Team are excited about the repairs and improvements we have completed over the summer to make our building and grounds more safe, attractive, accessible, and comfortable. Here is a list of both the completed projects and those we are working on.

Completed

Outside

- Parking lot sealed and striped, and entry ramp repaired.
- Clinton Vestibule exterior doors repainted.
- Parking lot door secured after vandalism and new window ordered.
- Temporary storm windows installed to replace broken ones in the Clara Barton Lounge.
- Lounge window screen repaired.
- New security cameras mounted over Court St. entry, beside the parking lot door, on the south side of the building, and in the south garden nook.



Inside

- Radiator in Clinton Vestibule painted and new radiator cover built and installed.
- Insides of Clinton Vestibule exit doors and frames repaired and repainted.
- Accessible coffee counter set up in the CBL.
- Banners hung in the CBL to hide three broken windows.
- Ventilation system installed, with louvered fans in attic (see article in September's *Outlook*).
- Multiple repairs made to steam system in boiler room.

- Train room entry door weatherized.
- Clinton Vestibule windows repaired so that five open, and all have been weatherstripped.
- Unused ceiling conduit in the Clinton Vestibule removed in preparation for painting the room.
- Accessible sink installed in large bathroom.
- Installed locks on two third floor rooms to enable rental income for the church.
- Cleaned, reorganized and refurbished second and third floor rooms (details in November's *Outlook*).
- Misc. repairs: installed new stair railings, rehung doors, repaired vacuum cleaner, etc.

In Process

Outside

- Window for parking lot door ordered, due by early October.
- CBL and office storm windows ordered, due by early October
- Search started for artisans to repair stained glass.
- Custom-made storms and screens ordered for Clinton Vestibule windows.
- Repair of Little Free Library underway.

Inside

- Contractor hired to paint Clinton Vestibule in October or November.
- Contractor hired to finish remodeling of accessible bathroom; products ordered for installation.

We'd love to welcome more members to the House Committee; if you're interested in this important work, or just curious to know more, see Moritz Wagner, Marcy Klein, or Michael Scott, or email house@uuroc.org. ✚



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REGISTER TO VOTE



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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.

Minister | Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell

Minister of Lifespan Faith Dev. |
Rev. Michelle Yates

Music Co-Directors | Dr. Brock Tjosvold
& Dr. Claudio Espejo

Office Manager | Mx. Emma Barry

Cong. Life Coordinator | Justin Wilson

26-28 Ministerial Intern | Meghan Garvey

Worship begins at 10:30am on Sundays

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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.**