



Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

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Church of Rochester

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Sunday Services | November 2025

November 2 | *Risking a Rest—Pajama/Cozy Clothes Sunday!*

Rest is an essential need for all living things, but when we're caught up in a system of over-production and over-consumption, rest can feel like a risk. How do we reclaim our need to rest?

— Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell

November 9 | *The Cost of Community*

What is the cost of community care? And in this moment of turmoil and upheaval, what do we risk if we fail to cultivate it?

— Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell

November 16 | *Stone Soup*

Join us for this multigenerational story service, where we retell the folk story of Stone Soup and wonder at how the sum of us all together is worth so much more than each of us, alone.

— Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell

November 23 | *Who Are We Willing to Risk?*

In observance of **Trans Day of Remembrance**, we ask ourselves, whose risks make us all more free? Whose bodies and lives are we willing to risk?

— Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell

November 30 | *Seeds of Change: Risk & Gift Culture*

What do we risk as we practice collective care inside market economy? If you've read Robin Wall Kimmerer's words and hunger to weave this wisdom into your daily life, join us. With plants as our teachers, expect to laugh, cry and come alive as we explore living in old and new ways! Bring a bag to bring home an abundance of seeds to sow more fruitful futures. Join us for deeper dialogue after coffee hour!

— Petra Page-Mann

❖ 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. ❖



Risks of Love

*A Message from
Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell*

Dear Ones,

I write this letter in a week when we commended a beloved congregant's body back to the earth. The sun shone on her gathered family while yellow leaves fell softly and geese flew overhead.

In the same week, we continued to work to restore our building's accessibility by repairing the elevator and continue to grieve the absence of our disabled beloveds. We are, at the same time, tenderly holding in our hearts the wellbeing of neighbors who seek shelter in our alcove while we work for better, safer shelter for them. It is a risk to live in the vulnerability of a body. To be woven into the vulnerability of the web of life.

And a few days ago I officiated the wedding of two people who had lost past loves to death and were choosing the risk of love again. It is, of course, always a risk to love. A risk to know a person in all their gifts and needs, their brokenness and their holy wholeness, and to choose to weave our life with theirs.

What an honor it is, as a church, to hold space for one another to take the risks of living and love.

As the earth calls us into quiet and darkness, and we prepare to celebrate a baby whose birth in Palestine 2000 years ago changed the world, I want us to ask ourselves today: who bears the greatest risk of living and loving under our empire's power?

To live is a risk; to love is a risk. Some carry the risk of the vulnerability of life more than others. It is time to ask ourselves what we are willing to risk to belong to Love.

With care,

Rev. Eileen ❖



Trans Lives Are Sacred!

*A Message from
Rev. Michelle Yates*

For most of her life, our Unitarian Universalist church was the only place my mother felt safe to be “out” as a lesbian. As a kid, I had to remember to say that my mom’s partner was her “friend” and “house mate,” at a time when your job, safety, and child custody was not guaranteed for gay people. But at church we were safe, and treated as a “real” family.

After recent years of progress, our trans and gender queer siblings are now under increased threat, having their rights and recognition of their identities taken away. My trans colleagues were recently sharing what U.S. states they no longer feel safe traveling to and about not wanting to fly nationally as an “other” gender option is no longer available.

Like my family 35 years ago, our church may be the only place someone who is gender queer can feel safe being “out”, seen as their whole self, and have their pronouns honored. What can we do to make sure trans folk feel safe in our church community?

The worship associates have recognized a need to introduce worship leaders with their pronouns each Sunday to remind ourselves that acknowledging and honoring this part of a person’s identity is a significant way we show care and respect for each person’s inherent worth and dignity.

We as a church are discerning how to voice to the larger community that we recognize trans and gender queer people as sacred. Just as we put up our “Black Lives Matter” banner when our Black beloveds were NOT being treated that way. We will raise a “Trans Lives Are Sacred” banner because they are NOT being treated that way.

We know we will need to work at living it and living into that value every week. Working on our welcome, taking pronouns seriously by working on re-training our brain pathways, and continuing to look for other ways to help trans folk feel seen and safe in our community.

We can do it! I am proud to serve a faith community that makes inclusion a priority, and will help each other to get there together.

Yours in the Journey, Rev. Michelle ❖



Literally Building Community

Submitted by Justin Wilson, Congregational Life Coord.

We often talk about the idea of “building community,” though it is sometimes a bit abstract rather than concrete. And so often, the term “literally” is used in a non-literal sense. But at the beginning of October, our congregants (Richard Reed, Adam Durand, Justin Wilson, and Tom Coakley) joined with partners at *Kaboom!*, the City of Rochester, Healthi Kids (Common Ground Health), Sierra (T. J. Maxx Companies), and Rochester R-Centers to literally build community together.

After months of planning, two set-up days, and one fun-filled build day, a space that was once a patch of grass was transformed into a new playground for the Beechwood and Homestead Heights area on the city’s near northeast side. It’s conveniently located at the Ryan R-Center, School 33, and Sully Library complex. We are proud to have been a part of helping bring this vision to reality! We are excited that this space will nurture the playful spirit and serve the community for many years to come.

Looking for more way to get involved at First Universalist? Contact me at conglife@uuroc.org. ✦



Drop-In Discussion

Submitted by John Lukes

Drop-in discussions are held Tuesday evenings from 6:30-7:30pm via the church Zoom account, and in-person on the first Sunday of each month in the Chalice Room at 9:15am. Phil Ebersole is the contact for in-person discussions. Contact DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org for the link, or look on uuroc.org!

Sunday, Nov. 2 | Humans Assisting Humans - David Damico *In-person*

Since the “Enlightenment” religious thought has refined itself, becoming more secular. As editor of the *Universalist Herald*, I have noticed a wide variety of viewpoints concerning how “Universalism” can be interpreted as a form of Humanism. As religious liberals, the topic is worthy of discussion. This discussion will relate to the slow lessening of religious reliance and a refocusing on humankind relying on itself. David Damico facilitates.

Nov. 4 | Your Questions for the Minister

Tonight we have the opportunity to ask Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell whatever we're curious about. And since it's also Election Night, Rev. Eileen wants to take a few minutes to discuss whatever anxiety/hope/grief/rage we're holding at the moment. All are welcome!

Nov. 11 | Recovery All Ways: Compassion in Action

Co-founder of Recovery All Ways (RAW), Gary Harding shares how neighbors lifting neighbors is reshaping Rochester, one meal, one conversation, one act of care at a time. Gary will discuss their Sunday operations, cleanup and outreach, helping those battling substance use disorder, mental health issues, homelessness, and how RAW is volunteer-led and -run.

Nov. 18 | Person Centered Housing Options (PCHO)

Tonight we will learn about what the *Person Centered Housing Options* (PCHO) community organization is, what they do, and how First Universalist can help. Presented by Nicholas Coultier

Nov. 25 | Railroad Trains: Real & Scale Models

Tonight let's discuss our relationships with trains, both real and scale models. Let's share our train-related stories and discuss why we don't build more railroads instead of highways. John Lukes will lead.

Have a topic for us? Contact our team with your proposal at DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org. ✦



Social Justice Plate: Rural & Migrant Ministry

Our November Social Justice Plate Offering is designated for *Rural and Migrant Ministry* and will be collected on November 16.

“We put our mission into action through five main program areas: Accompaniment (Standing With Others), Rural Academy of the People (Nurturing Leadership), Youth Empowerment, Immigrant Legal Rights Project, and Community Good Federal Credit Union (Financial Equity).”

Please contribute to support this important work. More info can be found at ruralmigrantministry.org. ✦



Animal Ministry: *Littlefoot's Thanksgiving*

Submitted by submitted by Adam Durand

In the Spring of 2024, workers at a local feed store had a problem. They were selling live turkeys, and two poults were sick and failing to thrive. Baby turkeys in this situation usually face a dark fate, but one of the workers spotted the founders of Mockingbird Farm Sanctuary and asked them for help.

The two turkeys were in luck, but the fight wasn't over. They both suffered from respiratory infections and needed intensive veterinary care, something they would never see in the food system they had escaped from. They received 24-hour monitoring and care, and miraculously, they both pulled through and became lifelong residents at Mockingbird.



These two sweet girls were very much like dinosaurs, so we gave them the names Petrie and Littlefoot (a reference to the animated film *The Land Before Time*). They grew fast, and were introduced to the herd where they held their own against feisty goats several times their size.

Thanksgiving 2024 was a special day for the two. I was there to help prepare a feast of pumpkin pie, berries, and corn. It was one of my most joyful and memorable Thanksgiving experiences. The turkeys, bucking American tradition, got to enjoy it even more than me.

I became a lead caregiver at Mockingbird last year. Over the months I've spent with Petrie and Littlefoot, our bonds grew, and by springtime this year I had started receiving cuddles from each of them, often at the same time. It extended my volunteer time by as much as an hour per day, but their affection was

inescapable.

Sadly, Petrie developed cancer in her leg. Her attitude changed, likely due to pain, and she had to be euthanized early this summer. Littlefoot was always the one more demanding of cuddles, and she has become even needier and snugglier with her sister gone. She gets all the affection I can give her, and will be doubly spoiled this Thanksgiving.

The UU faith is one of the few that recognizes the value of all animals beyond their use to us. The definition of our shared value of Interdependence, published last year by the UUA, states that we "covenant to protect Earth and all beings from exploitation." We have a lot of work ahead of us.

While you are reading this, over 40 million turkeys just like Petrie and Littlefoot are being pulled out of crowded, dank sheds to be packed into trucks and brought in all weather conditions to slaughter. Turkeys are exempt from the Humane Slaughter Act, so they are generally fully conscious and terrified when they meet their end.

Our food traditions are an ingrained part of our culture. Most people are generally against what we do to animals for food, and yet the practices go on year after year.

It's easy to feel hopeless when sweet, trusting animals are such a central part of our menu over the holidays. But Littlefoot gives me hope. Someday, hopefully soon, more consumers will align their mealtime actions with their values.

By the way, I wrote this article with my dear Littlefoot snuggled against me. She sends her love. ❖





NEW THIS FALL JUSTICE HOUR

WEDNESDAYS, 11 AM - NOON
STARTING OCTOBER 8
HOLY FAMILY CHAPEL, 150 FRENCH RD.

Learn, Reflect, Act
with the SSJ Justice & Care for Creation Committee.
Each week a new topic for exploration.
All are welcome.

OCTOBER 8	"JESUS AND THE EARTH: SEEING CHRIST THROUGH AN ECOLOGICAL LENS" YOUTUBE TALK BY ELIZABETH JOHNSON + CONVERSATION
OCTOBER 15	FALL MUSICAL CONTEMPLATION
OCTOBER 22	IMMIGRATION IN ROCHESTER: WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH REFUGEE RESTTLEMENT?
OCTOBER 29	IMMIGRATION IN ROCHESTER: NEW HOPE IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICES
NOVEMBER 5	AI--WHAT IS THE ENVIRONMENTAL COST?
NOVEMBER 12	A DATA CENTER IN WESTERN NEW YORK? STOP THE STAMP!
NOVEMBER 19	NATURE AWARENESS GRATITUDE MEDITATION
DECEMBER 3	REMEMBER MENDING? KEEPING CLOTHES OUT OF THE LANDFILL
DECEMBER 10	UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMUNITY READ ALOUD
DECEMBER 17	CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER WITH "COME HAVE BREAKFAST"

JUSTICE HOUR TOPICS MAY CHANGE AS THE WORLD'S EVENTS UNFOLD.
QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS--CONTACT HOLLY ROCKWELL
641-8180 OR [HROCKWELL@SSJROCHESTER.ORG](mailto:hrockwell@ssjrochester.org)



Committee Chairs (left to right) Joy Leccese and Connie Valk

Spotlight on Committees & Groups: *Faith In Action Council (FIAC)*

Submitted by Connie Valk, FIAC Co-Chair

In our UU community, so much of the heart and hands-on work happens behind the scenes — in our committees. That's why the Communications Committee is presenting *Spotlight on Committees & Groups*, a regular newsletter feature that celebrates the people and purpose behind these vital teams.

Each month, we'll lift up one committee's (or group's) mission, share what they're working on, and highlight ways you can get involved. Whether you're passionate about justice, music, spiritual exploration, care and connection, or the logistics that keep us running smoothly — there's a place for your gifts. Whether you're new to our congregation or have been here for years, we hope *Spotlight on Committees & Groups* will inspire you to get involved in a new way.

We hope this series will deepen your understanding of how we live our UU values through shared leadership and collaborative service — and maybe even spark your curiosity to join in!

Let's build beloved community, together.

Current Chair & Members: Connie Valk & Joy Leccese (Co-Chairs), Michael Corsale and Becky Elwell

Your committee's mission or purpose: FIAC acts as the administrative umbrella for Social Justice initiatives for First Universalist Church.

Committee responsibilities:

- Administers monthly Social Justice Plate offerings for recipient nonprofits selected by the congregation.

- Facilitates the choosing of the Whole Church Project by the congregation, and identifies leadership for the project.
- Supports the formation and operation of Social Justice Circles.
- Oversees budget for Social Justice.

Something you wish people knew about your committee: If five people have a particular social justice interest, they can form a Social Justice Circle—they just need to contact us at FIAC@uuroc.org.

One big/special project your committee has been working on lately: During the 2025-2026 church year, we'll assist the congregation in choosing the next Whole Church Project.

Are you looking for new members? Yes!

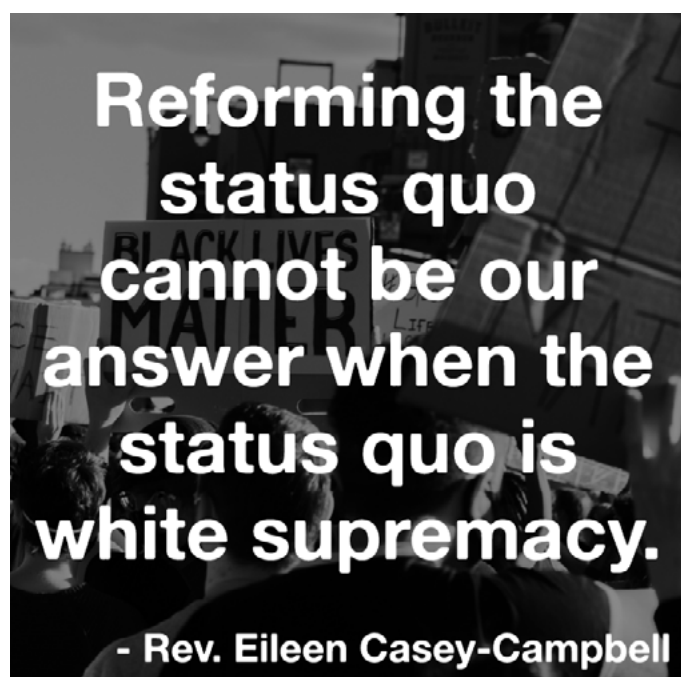
Are members voted on by the congregation or do they volunteer? They ask to be part of FIAC. The Board gives its approval.

How often do you meet? Generally, monthly at the convenience of council members.

How do you meet? By Zoom

Are there any special qualifications/talents required to serve on your committee? A willingness to support social justice. Administrative skills are a plus!

What is the Committee email? fiac@uuroc.org ✦



Membership Committee

Submitted by Donna Anderson, Membership Chair

Hello everyone! This month I'd like to introduce Willow Shirtz (she/him). Willow joined our church a year ago. She has been welcoming others visiting, getting to know folks in our church, ushering, and is now the newest member of the Worship Associates! Welcome, Willow!

Here is Willow's story!

"Like many adults who left the faith that their parents raised them in, I often have felt a church-community-shaped void in my heart. I was raised by devout members of *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (often nicknamed Mormons, although some do not like shortening of their faith's name). Since the LDS faith operates almost entirely off of unpaid volunteers at the local level, much of my youth was spent in ecclesiastical pursuits, as my father was the lay pastor for our congregation during my formative years. I grew accustomed to the ritual of blessing and passing of their sacrament during Sunday services, and served an LDS mission in Venezuela, during which time I held a minister's license.

Daily scripture study, prayer, reading religious books. I became something of an expert. However the LDS's faith's truth claims were never settled as "proven" to me, and eventually in my adulthood I left that faith.

Since then, my religious and spiritual journey has led me to many different congregations and traditions; among those I have encountered, I have made my religious and spiritual home at First Universalist in Rochester, NY.

As a wayward soul, I find the theology of Unitarian Universalism less important to me than the impact it has on those who adhere to it. UU's adhere to seven guiding principles, which while well worth studying individually, collectively can be summed up in a single word—hospitality. I appreciate having a spiritual home, whereas as a non-binary, pansexual, and all around queer atheist, my perspective, life experiences, and abilities are better than merely tolerated. They are celebrated, and embraced.

Since starting to attend First Universalist in Rochester last year, I've had many experiences with this congregation. Some routine, like services, others unexpected, like social connections, or impromptu service to those in need. Through it all, I've come to see my fellow congregants as family, and First Universalist, my spiritual home.

There is no going back to the faith I was raised in. Fortunately for me, I have found a place where my sense of community, ritual, and service can feel at peace without compromising my intellectual capacities, curiosity for further truth, or zest for personal exploration. I would recommend that my fellow "stray cats" from various spiritual traditions who are seeking a new home give us a try. You have nothing to lose, and so much you could gain! I'll be sure to listen to your stories, and trade some of my own if you introduce yourself to me at services."

Willow Shirtz, October 2025

Thank you, Willow, for sharing with us! We look forward to nurturing the spirit and serving the community with you. ❖



First Universalists are never too old to resist, as seen here at the "No Kings" Rally on October 18. From left to right; Connie Valk, Gary Levine, Pat Deane, and Paula Marchese. ❖

EcoJustice & Animal Ministry: Vegan Potluck Lunch

Submitted by Sarah Singal & Lois Baum

Join us on Saturday, November 22, for an afternoon of community, conversation, and delicious food, noon to 2:45pm.

Rochester Vegan Society suggests, for potlucks, bringing enough to serve 8 people (rochesterveg.org).

Please list every ingredient on a card, or recipe if you prefer, as our church always does for our gatherings. Some folks have specific food allergies or sensitivities, ie: gluten. If your dish is vegan and/or gluten-free please be sure to write that on your ingredient card. Also, keep in mind, we are a peanut-free church.

Vegan means no animal products, so no: honey, dairy, milk, egg, butter, gelatin, casein, whey, fish/meat/chicken broth. If any ingredient came from an animal, then the dish is not vegan.

A few vegan alternatives for some common foods, found in coolers at your grocer:

- Veganaise (for mayo)
- Earth Balance (butter)
- Violife or Daiya cheese
- Tofutti (sour cream/cream cheese)
- Silk soy milk, oat milk
- Nutpods (creamer)

Why vegan? The vegan diet is a great way to support the health of the planet and all animals on it. As more people embrace a vegan ethic, everyone needs to have tasty dishes in their repertoire to bring to potlucks such as this.

Can't/won't cook? Bring carrot or celery sticks (be sure the dressing is vegan). Or you could get something prepared from Red Fern, Natural Oasis, Hollycake House, Vegan Butcher, or other local vegan businesses. Note: the marketing term "plant-based" does not guarantee it's vegan, only that its base is plant!

All are welcome. Let's have fun! ♣



EcoJustice: The Dirty Little Secret of Getting Your Laundry Clean

Submitted by Connie Valk and Lois Baum

Roughly 700 million plastic laundry jugs are discarded annually in the US, with 70% of them ending up in landfills, as only 30% are recycled. In a landfill, they take hundreds of years to decompose.

First Universalist's EcoJustice Committee would like you to try an alternative to those eco-UNfriendly jugs. After some research and testing, we found three laundry products that are eco-friendly, containing no plastic in the container or product, and are each vegan and cruelty-free:

- Meliora laundry powder
- Proofed! laundry sheets
- ECOS laundry sheets

A supply of each will be sold at cost in the Clara Barton Lounge during November.

Come to our EcoJustice display to learn about why these products were chosen over other laundry powders and sheets, and be prepared to feel good about this one way to be environmentally responsible.

The EcoJustice Group meets on the first Sunday of each month in the Chalice Room at noon. Our next meeting is November 2. All are welcome! ♣



NEW YORK UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST JUSTICE

2nd annual **JUSTICE CONVOCATION** From Revival to Resistance

Join NYUJJ for our annual in-person Justice Convocation. We will worship, network, connect, learn about making change in New York State, and take action on important issues. Our workshops will be interactive and energizing, and our day will inspire and connect us for the work ahead.

Beyond the
Climate
Revival

Defending
Democracy

Protecting
Immigrants

Engaging
our
Communities

Advocating
for a Just
State
Budget

Taking
Action

Join Us In Person or on Zoom!

To Register

<https://bit.ly/NYUJJConvocation>



For More Information:

nyuuj.org

Saturday, November 15, 2025

10am-4pm

Albany UU

Sliding Scale Registration \$1-100

*Join us Friday for an
action to ask Governor Hochul to
sign Medical Aid in Dying!*



RAICA Summit

Hope, Resilience and Resistance in a Time of Climate Crisis

Sunday, November 16, 1:00 - 4:30 PM
Temple B'rith Kodesh, 2131 Elmwood Ave, Rochester

Keynote Speaker
The Rt. Rev. Kara Wagner Sherer, Episcopal Bishop of Rochester

Breakout Sessions Include

Parenting in a Changing Climate ~ Emma Nelson, PhD.

Sharing Abundance on the Farm and Beyond ~ Petra Page Mann

Pragmatic Resistance, Locally Focused Climate Advocacy ~ Sue Hughes-Smith and Katie Rygg

Promoting the Sharing Economy and Hands-on Upcycling ~ Local Organizations

Rights of Nature and Its Impact on Future Generations ~ Holly Rockwell

De- Plasticizing our Homes and Houses of Worship ~ Heidi Beutler & Melissa Carlson

Energy Efficiency and Financial Incentive Changes ~ Brett Peters

Climate Drumming Circle ~ Rochester Music Lab

Doing Justice with Climate Allies ~ RAICA Volunteers

Supporting Nature (That's Us, Too!) ~ Jill Carter

No charge to attend, but registration is required.
Register at RAICA.net or scan the QR code



SCAN ME



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 Director | Dr. Brock Tjosvold

Office Manager | Mx. Emma Barry

Finance Admin | Maresa Carmody

Cong. Life Coordinator | Justin Wilson

Nursery Care Provider | Carol Williams

Worship begins at 10:30am on Sundays

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Adam Durand, & Clinton Swingle

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.**