



Our Outlook

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**First Universalist
Church of Rochester**

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Sunday Services | September 2025

Sept. 7 | *What Mischief Are We Gonna Do Next?*

In a time when we may feel politically powerless, small, or ineffectual, we could turn to despair. Or to the sort of mischief that chips away at the edifice of empire and brings a different sort of power to the small and the vulnerable. Let us imagine some good trouble-making together.
— *Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell*

Sept. 14 | *Liberation as Reciprocity*

As we dive deeper into this season of Liberation, let us consider what its cost and its value will be. Can we conceive of the world in terms of grace rather than transaction?
— *Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell*

Sept. 21 | *The Anti-Prosperity Gospel*

Does practicing liberation, for us, mean promising the opposite of a prosperity gospel? Where is the spiritual meaning to be found in knowing that—whether we are saved or not—we can't be saviors? Maybe vulnerability is the cost of liberation, when we start from a place of power.
— *Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell*

Sept. 28 | *Behold the Banshee*

Living through a period of great political unveiling and uncertainty, how might our ancestral grief practices be calling us? Join us as seminarian Meghan Garvey offers a reflection on grieving well as an essential nutrient for getting free.
— *Meghan Garvey*

❖ **Services begin at 10:30am** ❖

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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. ❖



Embracing Uncertainty

*A Message from
Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell*

Dear ones,

I write to you at the very beginning of our shared ministry together at First Universalist, with uncertainty as my constant companion these days. My recent hours have been filled with questions like: Who is in charge of this? When do we do that? Where is that thing? Whose coffee mug am I accidentally drinking out of?

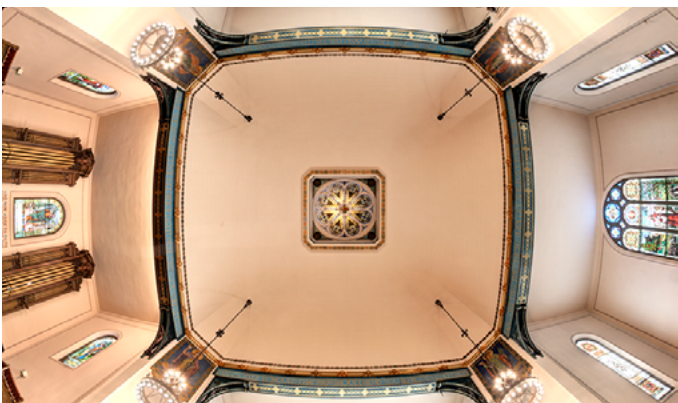
Change is hard. It is exciting, thrilling, good for us, but it is not comfortable. It requires us to rethink The Way We Do Things and imagine new possibilities. It demands we grow from our positions of comfort into new capacities. Liberation, our theme for the Harvest Season, asks the same of us, I think.

For those of us with any power or privilege in the systems of injustice as they are, the work of liberation is so often uncomfortable. It is the shaking loose of stagnant comfort in order to embrace something larger. It is the rejection of the promised safety of those systems in exchange for sanctuary with one another. It is the breaking down of the dividing walls of supposed security we've built in order to meet the freedom of our oneness.

I hope we can embrace this work together with a spirit of play. Let us be ready to be uncertain and uncomfortable together. Ready to make mistakes, to make a glorious mess, and to joyfully imagine new ways of living and loving.

So glad to be with you,

Rev. Eileen ❖



Adult Faith Development Committee?

*A Message from
Rev. Michelle Yates*

Once upon a time, our Adult Faith Development Committee brainstormed, planned, supported and implemented (along with our Lifespan Faith Development staff, me) church programs that might vary from year to year. These include various programs to meet the spiritual growth and development interests of the congregation, like our Cozy Night Suppers. Examples include Articulating Your UU Faith, Race to Justice, Aging to Saging, Spiritual Practices, UU Common Read book discussions, a film series on the history and theology of Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalism, a *Neurodivergence in Church* film series and discussion, and more. Two of these were offered at local libraries.

The pandemic lockdown shifted how we did programs, but afterwards programming on Zoom became an option for even greater inclusion. When we first came back to church in-person, most people did not have the interest or energy for extra programming. So, the AFD Committee disbanded until a time it would be needed again...and that time is NOW!

This group does not have to be as it was, or even have the same name. I'm happy to be flexible in how we “nurture the spirit and serve the community.”

What I need is a “sounding board,” a group to share the energy and interests of the congregation as we discern the programming for the year, and a group that has some interest and energy in seeing programs happen that can't be run by one person alone. In the past this group met only 2-3 times each year: in late summer, mid-winter, and at the end of the church year.

While I am the staff support person for other programs like the Library, Book Group, Drop-In Discussion, and Small Group Ministries/Connection Circles, those groups have separate support structures and lay leaders who make their magic happen on regular schedules.

Please let me know if you are interested, if only to help guide the programming that you are interested in. Please reach out to me at edu@uuroc.org or in person.

Yours in the Journey, Rev. Michelle ❖



Finance

Submitted by Brian Mumey, Finance Chair

Welcome to the 2025-26 Fiscal Year! Info included in this article was distributed to staff and leadership at the end of July. If you ever have an interaction with our financial processes, I hope the info will make your interaction as smooth and painless as possible.

Two documents were linked in the July 30 email. If you are reading this article online, they are linked in the document titles below. If you are reading the print version, you can email finance@uuroc.org, call me (my number is in the directory), or flag me down at church and I will get the documents to you.

[2025-26 Budget Figures Sheet](#)

The budget document is the 2025-26 budget approved by the congregation on June 1. This is the “roadmap” we will use to navigate this fiscal year. The closer we follow the map, the better the financial health of the church.

[“Finance Information for Leaders and Staff”](#)

The information document provides some recommendations and instructions on requesting payment for expenses. These expenses may have been incurred (purchased fertilizer for the garden, for example) or payment to a third party for work/service provided directly to the church (i.e. guest minister).

If you have any questions about the included materials or any other church financial matter, please send me an email at finance@uuroc.org. ❖

Opening for Childcare Assistant

Submitted by Rev. Michelle Yates

If you know someone over 18 years old who would enjoy working with children alongside our faithful childcare leader, Carol Williams, for two hours each Sunday, please share this link with them - tinyurl.com/4jptns2z. Questions? Email edu@uuroc.org with “Childcare” in the subject line. ❖

Volunteer Request: Help for Climate Solutions Accelerator Fringe Fest

Submitted by Connie Valk

On Sept. 13 First Universalist will provide access to our restrooms to accommodate participants in the Climate Solutions Accelerator Fringe Festival event held in Washington Square Park.

There will be two shifts to choose from — 1:45pm to 3:15pm OR 3:15pm to 5pm. Volunteers will welcome guests at the Court Street door, monitor the restrooms to make sure enough supplies are stocked, and be available to show our sanctuary to the curious.

Please contact ecojustice@uuroc.org if you can participate in this volunteer opportunity. ❖



Get Crafty With Us!

Submitted by Bridget Watts

Crafty afternoons are back! On Sunday, Sept. 14, 3:30-5:30pm, come to the Clara Barton Lounge for socializing and crafts. Bring your own project to work on, join in an easy craft project (supplies provided), play board games, or just hang out. All ages welcome! Please wear a respirator mask (masks provided if you need one).

One of a series of masked fun events organized by folks at Winton Rd. and First Universalist Church, open to both our members, friends, and the general public. Watch for future events, same time, same place, on the second Sunday of the month, through December (Oct. 12, Nov. 9, and Dec. 14.) Questions? Contact Bridget Watts. ❖

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, Sept. 7 | Open Talk & Planning *In-person*

We'll meet to decide future topics, review and possibly revise our covenant, and otherwise talk about whatever is on our minds. All are welcome. We meet at 9:15am the first Sunday of the month in the Chalice Room.

Sept. 2 | Open Topic

Tonight we'll discuss whatever is on our minds lately and to continue our discussion around suggestions for upcoming topics and presenters.

Sept. 9 | Your Dream Vacation

Let's have an open discussion about our "Dream Vacations" if time, money, climate, and other limitations were not present. If you don't already have a "Dream Vacation", make one up and share it with us! John Lukes will host and moderate.

Sept. 16 | What's a "Gift Economy" and Could It Work?

After receiving Rev. Eileen's sermon on "Liberation as Reciprocity" on September 14, let's review the wisdom offered in *The Serviceberry: An Economy of Gifts and Abundance* by Robin Wall Kimmerer (author of *Braiding Sweetgrass*). Beyond being a "nice idea," where have you seen, heard, or experienced systems of reciprocity? How can we encourage such systems in the circles we live in and beyond?

Sept. 23 | Dearly-Departed Animal Friends

Let's share memories of animals we've known and loved, as pets or through other circumstances, and talk about what we have learned through these experiences. John Lukes will moderate.

Sept. 30 | Rev. Kirby: Con Man, Reformer, or Prophet?

Rev. Kirby Hensley founded and led Universal Life Church, which offered mail-order ordinations coupled with an all-inclusive creed: "Universal Life". Was this a challenge to what is considered a church—or a con? Let's discuss what may apply to our experiences. John Lukes will present and moderate.

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



Let's Make a NEW Room for YRUU!

Submitted by Justin Wilson, Congregational Life Coord.

Mark your calendars and plan ahead: the former YRUU Room on the second floor will be undergoing renovations. We want to create a modern and welcoming room for small groups, especially teens and young adults. This will increase our ability to offer more programs to attract new congregants, along with adding to our rental space options to outside groups on an accessible floor.

We need your help to make this happen! Right now, the room is host to a variety of items: old furniture, toys, equipment, and other belongings. The first phase of the room makeover is clearing the room out.

Our "clean sweep" date is Sunday, November 16. If you have items in this room, please collect them; if there are program-related items that belong elsewhere, please move them; and if there are any items that should be saved from this room, please identify them. Unclaimed items remaining in the room after worship services on November 16 may be donated or discarded.

If you would like to help with cleaning, renovating, or re-imagining this space, please contact me at conglife@uuroc.org. ❖



Immigrant Justice

Submitted by Bridget Watts

Our neighbors are under attack.

In Rochester, Latino roofing crews and workers at an Asian grocery have been detained by Federal agents. People are being taken from their workplaces and families without due process. Members of Rochester’s sizable Haitian community have suddenly become “illegal” as the result of an executive order and are becoming destitute because they can’t work. Avelo Airlines—which flies out of Rochester—transports shackled prisoners for ICE.

Many of us are wondering what we can, or should, do to help our immigrant neighbors. If you would like to be added to a mailing list to be informed about—and share—opportunities for taking action or for learning more about these issues, please send your email address to Bridget Watts.

The next step, if there is enough interest, will be to form a Social Justice Circle on this issue ❖



Serve the Community with a New Playground!

Submitted by Justin Wilson, Congregational Life Coord.

We are looking for service-minded congregants with availability on Friday, October 3, to join forces with community partners to build a new playground. Kaboom!, The City of Rochester, Healthi Kids (Common Ground Health), Sierra (TJ Maxx Family), and more are already in the final planning stages and initial ground-breaking for a new playground at the

Ryan R-Center, near the intersection of Webster Ave. and Bay Street. This community-designed structure will allow children of all ages to enjoy safe play, a vital component for healthy childhood. And you can help!

Volunteers are needed before and on build day for a variety of tasks: obtaining donations of food and snacks, gathering borrowed tools, registering volunteers, conducting kid-friendly activities, providing photography or DJ/sound system services, and of course constructing the playground.

Your humble Congregational Life Coordinator, Justin Wilson, will be trained as a team leader. There are plenty of opportunities. Participants will receive a free themed t-shirt from Sierra, while supplies last, along with the good feeling of truly serving our community by contributing toward a concrete and tangible project that will last for years.

If you are interested or want to learn more, please contact Justin Wilson at conglife@uuroc.org. ❖



Social Justice Plate: Climate Solutions Accelerator

Our September Social Justice Plate Offering is designated for *Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Finger Lakes* and will be collected on September 21.

The *Climate Solutions Accelerator* is an inclusive, nonpartisan 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to inspiring and facilitating a large-scale climate mobilization in the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region. Their mission: to create a healthier, more equitable, and environmentally sustainable community by catalyzing local efforts to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions and address the effects of climate change.

Please contribute to support this important work. For more info, visit their website, climategfl.org. ❖



Committee members (left to right) Connie Valk, Dolores Da Lomba, Lisa Gwinner (chair), Marcy Klein, and Emma Barry (office manager)

Spotlight on Committees: Communications

Submitted by Lisa Gwinner, Communications Chair

In our UU community, so much of the heart and hands-on work happens behind the scenes — in our committees. That’s why we’re launching *Spotlight on Committees*, 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* 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: Lisa Gwinner (Chair), Emma Barry (Office Manager/Admin), Dolores Da Lomba, Marcy Klein, Connie Valk

Your committee’s mission or purpose: Our mission is to assist with communication within the church & between the church & community.

Committee responsibilities: We support the office manager/admin in their work with the church news-

letters, orders of service, and social media. We advertise church activities in local publications & also are available to support other committees with advertising. We can also assist with press releases. We oversee the church bulletin boards as well.

Something you wish people knew about your committee: I wish more people knew that we are available to assist their committees with communications!

One big/special project your committee has been working on lately: We are beginning to collect info from other committees so that they can be spotlighted in our newsletter and other in-house media. We hope this will help to inspire newcomers to the church to get involved.

Are you looking for new members?: Yes!

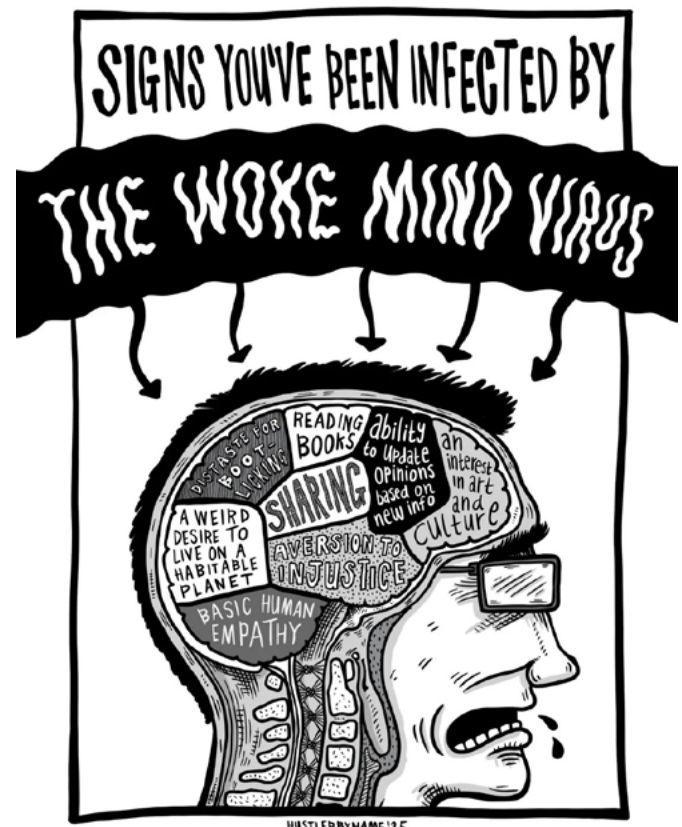
Are members voted on by the congregation or do they volunteer?: Volunteers

How often do you meet? : Monthly (except July)

How do you meet? : By Zoom

Are there any special qualifications/talents required to serve on your committee? : An interest in communications and/or social media would be great.

What is your Committee's email (if applicable):
communications@uuroc.org. ✨



Stewardship 2025: Come, Come, Whoever You Are...

Submitted by Ann Rhody

Come Celebrate! We are happy to report that we reached our goal of 100 pledges by June 30, unlocking an additional gift of over \$4,000 from members who agreed to give an extra \$100 if we met that goal.

Thanks so much to our fabulous Stewardship team, and to ALL who made a pledge to support the church this year.

If we missed you, it's not too late! A pledge, no matter the amount, is an affirmation that you have found a home here at First Universalist. Please connect with finance@uuroc.org if you have questions about Stewardship.

Ann Rhody and Howard Spindler, 2025
Stewardship co-chairs ❖



Outdoor Food, Families & Fun: Sept. 24, 6-8pm

Submitted by Rev. Michelle Yates

Many of us loved outdoor worship for a chance to gather in a different, park-like setting. For many families, Sunday morning worship doesn't always work with their schedule or need for rest. And all events are better with food and games.

Mark your calendar with the date and time, and keep an eye out for updates! The name might change if something more creative comes along, and the location is yet to be determined. Expect a blend of family worship, potluck without pressure, some fun games and other opportunities for connection.

Reach out to Rev. Michelle at edu@uuroc.org with questions or interest in helping/planning. ❖

A Summer of Beautiful Music!

Submitted by Ann Rhody, Summer music coordinator

Our congregation is full of people with amazing talents, and the musicians among us shared their talents generously over the summer! Many thanks to all of the volunteers who helped to nurture our spirits with music during summer services. What a joy!



2025 Summer musicians included Jillian Beaman, Charles Courtsal, Ed Deller, Adam Durand, Steve Farrington, Kitty Forbush, Peggy Meeker, Brian Mumey, Theo Munson, Ann Rhody, Anton Selitskiy, Howard Spindler, and Lew Ward-Baker. ❖

NYSCU: Celebrating 200 Years of "Love at the Center," Oct. 24-26

Submitted by Ann Rhody, NYSCU President

Come one, come all! The New York State Convention of Universalists (NYSCU) and the UU Church of Canton, NY, are both celebrating bi-centennial years in 2025. The Annual Meeting of NYSCU will take place at the Canton church on October 24 & 25, with the option to stay for activities and worship on the 26th.



This year's keynote speaker will be none other than UUA President, Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt, who is passionate about our Universalist heritage. The gathering will be full of history, hope, joy, and fellowship. Our church is entitled to six delegates. For those serving as delegates, the registration fee is waived and NYSCU subsidizes part of hotel costs.

Please speak to Ann Rhody or Michael Scott if you'd like to serve as a delegate from our congregation. And if you'd like to attend as a guest, we welcome you, too!

Info and registration materials at nyscu.org. ❖

Animal Ministry: PUPPY *un*LOVED

Submitted by Lois Baum

A little abuse is okay, right? I mean it's what happens to so many animals, and it's been going on for ages, so it must be okay, right? As long as someone else does it. After all, humans are the only species that truly matters, right? Why change anything!

The good news is there are, now, many ways to conduct scientific research, without using live animals. The bad news is there remain companies who'd rather profit than care. Alternatives abound and there is no reason to continue supporting practices that exploit animals. By now, you likely know what happens to animals used for food and what alternatives we have. But did you know ...

In our own backyard, less than an hour away, is a facility that breeds ferrets, cats, and beagles, to be shipped to laboratories nationwide for experimentation. In labs, tests are performed on animals without anesthesia. Beagles specifically are popular in vivisection because of their size and because they are docile. Puppies bred who don't make the grade are killed, rather than being adopted out to caring people (bfp.org: *Beagle Freedom Project*). Those who are shipped to labs are forced to endure a lifetime of egregious suffering, averaging 10-12 years, the same amount of time it takes a new drug to get to market, costing up to a billion dollars.

The "NIH admits that 95% of all drugs tested on animals fail in human trials" (peta.org). According to world renowned vet, Dr. Andre Menache (pva.net) "90-96% of drugs that pass animal trials fail in humans". One study found that a non-animal test using human stem cells had 93% sensitivity in developmental problems (crueltyfreeinternational.org).

The FDA presented a plan (April 2025) to phase out the requirement for animal testing in drug development by 2035. However, as the policy is not a "ban", that means breeding facilities may choose to continue breeding and supplying beagles for research. There are currently at least 23,000 beagles in the one nearby, awaiting shipment to labs.

The Beagle Alliance advocates for non-animal use in science (more efficient, more effective, less expensive). Here, they list just a few **ALTERNATIVES**:

- **Organs-on-Chips:** Human cells can be grown in

a lab, even as 3D structures, like human organs, on which new treatments can be tested, used to study diseases and how drugs work.

- **Cell Cultures:** central to key developments in areas such as cancer, sepsis, kidney disease, AIDS, and are routinely used in chemical safety testing, vaccine production, and drug development.
- **Computer Models:** used to predict how drugs will interact and can replace the use of animals.
- **Human Tissue:** volunteers donating both healthy and diseased tissues after surgery or post-mortem provides another way to study disease.
- **Microdosing:** volunteers are given small doses of drugs to measure how they react in the body.
- **Diagnostic Imaging:** machines that safely study and record the brain so that comparative studies of healthy and diseased tissue can be done without invasive testing on animal "subjects".

NIMBY, you say? Why not just STOP it altogether! Ask us, please! ❖



Membership Committee

Submitted by Donna Anderson, Membership Chair

The Membership Committee welcomes our new minister, Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell! Our church community will give an official welcome to her on Sunday, September 7!

Kevin Parkes and Justin Wilson are working on getting members, friends, and visitors sorted out and put into a document that's complete.

Grant Fish will be coordinating ushers/greeters for Sunday services. Training info available for anyone interested in becoming a greeter or an usher!

Membership has these events on the calendar:

- **New Member Sundays:** Nov. 9 & Feb. 8

Our committee is excited for the upcoming church year! Lots to look forward to with our new minister, Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell, and Justin Wilson, our Congregational Life Coordinator, providing new events/activities for our church community! ❖



Welcome Projects Update

Submitted by Marcy Klein, for the Welcome Team

Over the next few months, you may notice some changes to our building that we hope will make it more attractive, welcoming, and accessible. The Welcome Team and House Committee are working together to implement several improvements, based on congregational input and advice from architect and designer Christopher Brandt of Bero Architecture. We have prioritized our wish list and are beginning to work on the top five projects. (We'll seek final approval from the Board once cost estimates are firm.)

Clinton Vestibule

- **Repaint the outsides of the four exterior doors** (the interior wood is being professionally refinished, as approved by the congregation back in March). The current paint is worn, and the black and white color combination is too stark and inauthentic, according to the designer. He suggested several combinations of brighter, more appropriate colors to make the entryways more attractive.

- **Replace the storm windows.** The nine old storm windows facing Clinton Avenue are past their normal life expectancy, pitted from environmental wear, and are permanently cloudy. New storms will allow more light into the vestibule to brighten the area, improve visibility, and allow the stained glass to shine more brightly outside.

- **Strip the floor.** Years of wax buildup have discolored the beautiful quarry tile. The floors will be stripped to restore the original colors, and left unsealed. Quarry tile is very durable, and the unsealed look is the most authentic.

- **Build a radiator cover.** The bare radiator is an industrial-looking eyesore and burn hazard.

A woodworker will build a cover in the appropriate Mission / Arts & Crafts style; the wood will be stained to match the refinished doors.

Clara Barton Lounge

- **Buy four comfortable armchairs and a coffee table**—again in an architecturally appropriate style—to create a space in the library for reading or quiet conversations. The old library desk and bookcase were removed (special thanks to Ed Deller!), making room for the conversation area, and providing more overflow gathering space for big events. The new chairs and coffee table are in place in the Lounge.

Doors project

The pair of doors between the sanctuary and Court Street vestibule and the two pairs leading from the sanctuary to the Clinton Avenue vestibule have all been restored to their original beauty and look gorgeous. The interiors of the four entry doors between the alcoves and the Clinton vestibule are next; the south doors were just refinished and installed. The original brass push and kick plates were also restored, and have been reinstalled on the completed doors.

Future projects

Other top projects we might consider for next year, subject to board approval, are: 1) Hang two colorful tapestries featuring UU values in the Clinton vestibule, flanking the sanctuary doors. 2) Build a new lower L-shaped screen around the chair storage in the Clara Barton Lounge, with wood stained to match the room woodwork. 3) Build two bulletin boards matching the screen, to go behind the welcome and committee tables. 4) Buy or build a pair of matching vintage-look tables to flank the opening to the library and serve as welcome and committee tables. 5) Add a larger carpet mat in front of sanctuary doors in the Clinton vestibule to add color and better protect the sanctuary carpet.

If you would like to help with any of the top five projects, or have suggestions or questions, please contact a member of the Welcome Team—Marcy Klein, Sarah Singal, Justin Wilson, or board liaison, Michael Scott, or email house@uuroc.org. ❖



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

BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2025–2026

Michael Scott (*Pres.*), Heather Jones (*Clerk*),
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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.