



Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY

June 2018

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Minister of Life Span

Faith Development

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Sunday Services | June 2018

June 3 | *Being Human, Human Being.* As a unique human being, I have inherited the particular genetic mapping of my ancestors, making me unique and special, one of a kind ... or am I? Let's talk about being human.

—Rev. Sally Hamlin

June 10 | *Let Be What Is.* In this last of a series of sermons on spiritual practice, and as we near the end of this transition year, we'll consider the possibility of being okay with whatever is, of not pushing ourselves or fighting life.

—Rev. Peggy Meeker

June 17 | *Flower Communion.* Bring a flower (or several) and join us on this last Sunday of the "regular" church year for a multi-generational celebration of our community, our flowering, our Earth, and summertime!

—Rev. Peggy Meeker

June 24 | *TBA.* We'll start our summer services today (at 10 a.m.). The summer schedule means that the **Drop-In Discussion** will be held after the service, rather than before.

—Peter House





Pastor's Perspective

*Message from
The Reverend Peggy Meeker*

How Is It June Already?!

Our year together is almost over! I've really had a good time, and I hope you have, too. We've had some challenges, for sure, like hiring a new office administrator in October and then having to hire another one in November and keeping everything going while some of our best folks were busy doing something else (oh, right, looking for a new minister!). We've had some lapses—or at least I have—like the time when Brandon, our sexton, was on vacation and it didn't occur to me that someone needed to prepare the church for the Eastman Lunchtime concert ... But fortunately, we have an able office administrator, Andrea, who leapt into the breach. We've also had some losses, with the passing of two beloved members, Charlie Gibson and Jim Van Loon, as well as a loss of a different sort with the leaving of Stacey, our Music Director.

But we've had so many wonderful times too, from our Ingathering and Water Communion and the commissioning of the Ministerial Search Committee back in September to our Candidating Week and the beautiful service on freedom in May. Plus, we've done so much to move forward in our Journey to Justice, so much to educate ourselves and raise our own awareness as well as to show up as allies and witnesses. And most important of all, we've been community for each other as we've moved through this year—a year that started with grieving the loss of the previous minister, a year that held all our joys and sorrows, and a year that ends with great excitement about Rev. Lane Campbell's coming ministry here.

There is much to celebrate, and that's what we'll do on June 17th. We'll enjoy a traditional Flower Communion (bring a flower or three) and then we'll picnic together at Seneca Park. Sandwiched in between those things, we'll mark the end of my year with a release of covenant. There will be a bitter sweetness to the day. (My computer doesn't think that's a word, but I like it.) Such is life, and such is community, and I'm very thankful I've had this chance to celebrate the whole of it with you. Blessed be.

Settled Minister



Submitted by Nancy Gaede, Board President

Reverend Lane Campbell

May 7, 2018

We are thrilled to announce that the congregation of the First Universalist Church has called the Reverend Lane Campbell to be our new settled minister by a unanimous congregational vote on May 6th. Reverend Campbell will start her ministry with us in August. You can find out more information about Reverend Campbell at the church web site www.uuoc.org.

On behalf of the congregation, the Board of Trustees wishes to express deepest gratitude to the Ministerial Search Team for their dedication during this past year. Their discernment of the needs of our congregation guided them throughout the search process and has resulted in the successful call of Reverend Campbell.

We are also deeply grateful to Reverend Peggy Meeker for her skilled guidance and support as Interim Minister. She has gently and ably helped us to navigate through this transitional year in preparation for this exciting new chapter of ministry.

Music at First Universalist

A special thanks goes to Lisa Gwinner, Chair of the Music Committee, for coordinating—on very short notice! —the music for these last four Sundays of the regular church year (May 27th through June 17th). We are blessed with a wonderful music program. If you have any questions, concerns, or thanks, please let Lisa know.



thank you!



Walking Together

*Submitted by
The Rev. Michelle Yates,
Minister of Life Span Faith Development*

This year, in Children’s Worship and beyond, we have been exploring our Seven Unitarian Universalist Principles which we covenant to affirm and promote. Our Faith Development theme for June is the proposed eighth principle, “Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”

The Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU) organizing collective urges adoption of this 8th Principle in Unitarian Universalism and feels that doing so would articulate our commitment to the dismantling of white supremacy, within the stated principles of our faith. The proposed 8th Principle was written by Bruce Pollack-Johnson and Paula Cole Jones in 2013 and was presented to GA and UUA appointed committees that year, and every year since.

Some churches have chosen to work on the values stated in this proposed addition to the principles by adopting a version of this 8th principle within their covenant statement, or establishing an 8th Principle Task Force, whose mission is to implement anti-racism tools and practices toward institutional cultural change.

From BLUU, “Ours is not a religion of “anything goes.” As Black Unitarian Universalists, we acknowledge that while some see our faith as the “big tent” where everyone is welcome, UUs cannot uphold precepts or practices that undermine the worth and dignity of people of color at our common altars. We will not affirm white supremacist rhetoric, structures or practices as being in alignment with Unitarian Universalism

as a spiritual community. The maintenance of white supremacy and antiblackness in particular, whether in the practices of the Association or in the hearts of parishioners, has no place within our faith and must be unequivocally rooted out of our culture.”

This language and conversation aligns well with our Social Justice focus on Racial Justice for the next two years. What words or ideas in the proposed principle stand out to you? What words or ideas align with our church’s mission and growing edge? How might the “8th Principle” guide our vision and self-reflection as we consider a church wide project?

Walking with You,
-Rev. Michelle Yates

Calling All Musicians!

Submitted by Ann Rhody



Our summer services will be starting on June 24th, and music for those services is provided by volunteer musicians. Could you be one of them? Even if you have just one piece you’ve always wanted to try to perform, we’ll make a time and place for you to do it, whatever your voice or instrument. Please contact the summer music coordinator, Ann Rhody via office@uuroc.org for more information.

Annual Meeting



The annual congregational business meeting of the First Universalist Society will be held Sunday, **June 10th** immediately following the service. All members are encouraged to attend. Friends are welcome. Agenda items include approval of the 2018-2019 budget and elections for key positions.

FIAC

Faith In Action Council

Submitted by Joy Leccese

FIAC: Definitely, Faith In Action!

As we approach the end of this church year, we can definitely take pride in all that our congregation has undertaken in Social Justice Ministry efforts in 2017-18! One of the many ventures includes our book discussions, and in June, we will see a new section of the church Library shelves dedicated to topics and authors related to social justice. Be sure to check out the FIAC / Social Justice Project Team's report when you get your copy of the annual reports at the congregational meeting this month. There you will find a "who's who" of Social Justice Circles and Leaders, and details about what so many have been doing to raise awareness, address the needs of the vulnerable, and expand our presence in the wider community. We see a vibrant energy surge among us to right wrongs, live our principles, and make a difference: we invite you to contemplate how you can participate in this important work in the coming months, as we plan for opportunities for all of us to be of service.

Eco-Justice

Women and Girls, Part II Here and Now

Submitted by Kate Fleury

It's so obvious, isn't it? If I believe I have a future, something to live for, I can more easily put off having "fun right now," if there is a higher goal I am striving for. In Rochester and Monroe County, we have many organizations that promote and support women and girls. Many of the national organizations that assist women and girls also have local branches.

Females are often socialized to take care of others first, which may cause hesitancy to stand up for their own needs and desires. Rochester has the highest teen birth rate in our area, compared to the surrounding suburbs. Our high school graduation rate has risen to 51.9% but is still the lowest among New York State's five largest cities.

Zoe Terry says, "The best accessory a girl can have is confidence." Zoe Terry is an 11-year-old CEO from Florida, who designs African American dolls with the idea "Our Image, Our Style, Our Voice." She provides the dolls to little girls in need. She will be a speaker at the upcoming 2018 Empowerment Series held by *Women Helping Girls*. She has also started a *Girlpreneur* program and teaches teens how to combat bullying.

An organization with a rich history of supporting women is the *American Association of University Women*. Not so many years ago, the AAUW was instrumental in helping women gain the right to vote. At this year's New York State Convention, the AAUW will promote their program, "*Start Smart and Work Smart*" for pay equity, led by the director, Kimberly Churches. AAUW provides interest free loans for education. They have a *Lifelong Learning and Teaching Center for Women and Girls*. They provide a one-on-one mentoring program called *Women Helping Girls*, as shared by Carole Hoffman.

Planned Parenthood not only has contraceptive services, but also provides education for our community. Some of the programs are not directly connected to health or reproductive rights. Instead they encourage teens to participate in pursuing interests, such as music, which may allow hope. *If I have a bigger plan for myself, I might be able to avoid becoming a parent until I am better prepared.*

Eco-Justice cont.

The YWCA (*Young Women's Christian Association*) has a local emphasis on assistance with housing, supporting women in recovery, racial equity, literacy, and helping teens complete high school. There is drop-in child care, especially for school-aged parents. The YWCA wants to help women and girls achieve long term success.

The *Third Way Center* provides therapy and vocational programs for traumatized teens, including a residential facility that can accommodate babies with their mothers. The typical stay is about 7 months. One of the participants said, "My Truth is: Family, and My Hope is: To Go To college and Have a Happy Family."

Sports on the Run supports girls in sports who are 8-12 years old, helping them gain self-esteem. In Schenectady, as Beth Ares shared, there are "*Moon Bees*," whose goals include removing barriers for girls. This *Moon Catcher Project*, in Malawi, Uganda, Kenya, and the United States, holds sewing bees to produce reusable menstrual pads to help girls to stay in school. They teach young women about their bodies and how to keep themselves safe and clean. Other organizations to be aware of include, *Soroptimist*, *Live Your Dream*, *New York State Scholarships*, and *Girls, Inc.* The City of Rochester has a program, *Inspiring Beauty*, which provides access to mentoring by influential women in the community for young girls through educational and networking programs.

This is only the tip of the iceberg! If you know of special programs and opportunities that support women and girls in our area, please let us know. We will keep a file, so we can make them available to people we know, to RAIHN participants, and to others who may benefit.

Project Team Update

Our Journey to Justice

Submitted by Dolores Da Lomba

In our May 13th service, we mentioned some of the many groups for whom freedom and justice is still a dream deferred. The Rev. A. Powell Davies (minister of All Souls Unitarian Church in Washington, D.C. (from 1944-1957) was quoted in the Winter 2006 issue of UU World from his 1955 speech at Howard University. "It is true that the skies are dark with

threatenings and forebodings. It is true that human affairs have come to a crucial juncture. It is true that the danger is great. But it is also true that we are discovering in these dangerous days that we need not lose: that a better world can yet be made. I believe more deeply today than ever in my life in the democratic faith {that} human rights are by their nature universal, that none should hold the people in contempt, or profane the sacredness of conscience, or deny the worth of human life."

With our efforts to combat systemic racism, we can help make a better world. There are many factors that help maintain the current system. For our work against systemic racism, we must determine how to make our efforts the most effective. The Project Team will be offering the congregation many opportunities to take a closer look at racism and to decide how we can best use our resources and our time and energy. We hope that you will be interested in participating and in sharing your ideas.

Suggestion Box: In addition to our little physical Suggestion Box (located in the Clara Barton Lounge on Sundays) we now have an on-line Suggestion Box at pt-suggestions@uuroc.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

Survey: The Project Team will be asking you to complete a survey so that the Team can determine which aspects of systemic racism the majority of congregants are most interested in learning about or working on. We hope to get the survey to you before the end of the church year and we ask that you complete it as soon as possible so that we can use it as a guide to better plan activities for the coming year.

Book Discussion: For those of you who wish to get a jump ahead, the Project Team's fall book selection is *When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir* by Patrisse Khan-Cullers and Asha Bandele. I'm about half-way through and find it moving and heart-breaking. Copies will soon be available in the church library. Monroe County has 14 books and 3 CDs in its system, many of which are currently available. Copies are available in our church library, see page 13 for details.



Diversity Workshop

“*Building Capacity for Authentic Diversity*” is an opportunity to learn about practices that can fundamentally change how we interact across cultural differences. The workshop, to be held Saturday, June 9th, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at the UU Congregation of Binghamton, will be led by the Reverends Evin Carvill Ziemer, UUA Congregational Life Staff, and Darcey Laine, minister at the UU Church of Athens and Sheshequin. For more information, go to <https://www.uua.org/central-east/events/region/building-authentic-diversity-ny-18>.

Coffee Hour



Submitted by William Elwell

Sunday Coffee Hour needs new volunteers. Too few people are doing this yeoman service. The volunteers, who are reimbursed for their expenses, usually provide a variety of cookies, bagels, veggies, crackers and cheese and perhaps a cake. The coffee is made by the sexton and keeping the coffee refilled is required as is clean-up. So, if you like Coffee Hour on Sunday, please consider serving at least one Sunday a year. Contact Bill Elwell via office@uuroc.org for complete instructions.

Social Justice Plate



June 17, 2018

Submitted by Marcia Weaver

The Social Justice Plate Offering is collected during church service on the 3rd Sunday of every month and is given to an organization or agency which promotes justice, equality and compassion in the greater Rochester region (occasionally beyond). A different agency or organization is selected each month. The committee tries to select organizations that are grass roots.

Our plate offering for the month of June will be for the *Rochester Community Bikes*. They are a grassroots organization staffed entirely by volunteers. They repair and collect used bikes, free of charge to the Rochester area's most needy children and adults.

Some clients depend on bicycles as their main source of transportation for getting to and from work. They also distribute adult tricycles to disabled individuals who would not normally be able to ride.

Please think of the Rochesterians who would benefit from our generosity this summer when the plate is passed this June morning.

The amount of our collection on May 20th earmarked for the *Rural and Migrant Ministry* was a generous \$524 and the committee was able to donate \$126 to *Rochester People's Climate Coalition* in April. Thanks everyone!

This church community continues to amaze us and we thank you. Social Justice Plate Committee: Shirley Bond, Becky Elwell, and Marcia Weaver.

Living Our Values, Making A Difference

We Welcomed Rev. Lane Campbell As Our New Settled Minister

Members and friends had several opportunities to get to know her, and for her to get to know us.
Pictured here is the April 29 informal gathering.



(left to right) Katherine Flynn, Christine DeGolyer,
Howard Spindler, Rev. Lane Campbell, Moritz Wagner
Bridget Watts, Steve Munson



(left to right) Bridget Watts, Connie Valk, Dolores Da
Lomba, Becky Elwell and Martha Welch

(left to right) Tom Ruganis, Juanita Ball, (Kathy Russell (back
to camera) Shelley Adams, Marti Eggers, Jan Hickman,
Karen Ruganis, Rev. Lane and Moritz Wagner



Earth Day 2018



Shelley Adams (left) and Marcia Weaver were some of the Eco Justice Circle members who carried signs during the Earth Day's 2018 skit on April 22nd.

Earth Day brought us a skit during the regular church service from the Eco Justice and Social Justice members. Sarah Singal (left) narrated while Kate Fleury gave us the sun's point of view on taking care of the earth.



Our Tour of FoodLink

(From left to right) Kathy Russell, Beth Ares, Richard Reed, David Ares, Jeannie Gloss, and Heather (from FoodLink)



Finance Team

Submitted by Ann Rhody

2018 - 2019 Church Budget Presented at the Annual Congregational Meeting June 10

June is the month of the church budget - we approve a spending plan for the coming year and wrap up the current fiscal year.

While the Finance Committee and the Board have developed the budget over several months, the members of the congregation have the final say in the approval or rejection of the budget. The mission, and the funding of the mission, are ours to share! While the proposed budget is a bit “tighter” than in the past few years, we are going to be able to fund all the programs of the church and maintain our full fair share to the UUA and our regional affiliates. You’ll find that the Finance team has prepared information and rationale to help you make an informed decision when you vote at the Annual Meeting. So please be sure to attend - and as always, if you have any questions about church finance, don’t hesitate to contact treasurer Dick Shroyer or finance chair Ann Rhody via office@uuroc.org.



Save the Dates for the UUA General Assembly

This year’s GA—*All Are Called*—will be held June 20-24th in Kansas City, MO. Information is available at <https://www.uua.org/calendars/uua/general-assembly-2018>.

Our GA Orientation Webinars are scheduled and open for registration. They will also both be recorded and available for viewing after they occur. Two options! If you are participating from home, please attend our **off-site** orientation on **Thursday, May 24th from 7:00 - 8:30 pm**. Information is available at <https://www.uua.org/central-east/events/webinars/general-assembly-off-site-orientation>.

And if you are attending GA in person in Kansas City, please attend our **on-site** orientation on **Wednesday, June 13th from 8:00 - 9:30 pm**. Information is available at <https://www.uua.org/central-east/events/webinars/webinar-general-assembly-orientation>.

Evin Carvill Ziemer | Congregational Life Staff
Central East Region. Phone (330) 281-3306 |
eziemer@uua.org | skype: eziemer

RAIHN



*Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network
Keeping families together. Getting families home for good.*

Submitted by Christine DeGolyer

Train for RAIHN

Four times a year, temporarily homeless families stay as our guests at First Universalist for a week. We provide a safe haven and tasty meals. To volunteer with us or to learn more, attend the orientation session:

Tuesday, June 12th

6:30-8:30 pm

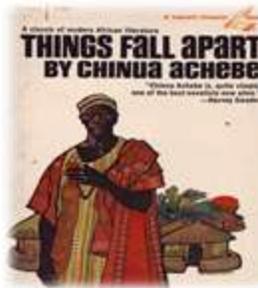
Aldersgate United Methodist Church
4115 Dewey Ave., Rochester

RSVP to Jen Canning, coordinator@raihn.org or (585) 506-9050. Questions? Ask Chris DeGolyer, Marti Eggers, or Sarah Singal after the Sunday service.

Book Group

Submitted by Sarah Singal and Shirley Bond

The selection for the month of June is the book *Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe. This book is a classic narrative about Africa's encounter with Europe as it establishes a presence on the continent.



Please join us June 24th at 12 noon upstairs in the Chalice Room as we spend a stress-free hour discussing this important work. You do not have read the book to participate, but please be aware that we will be discussing contents so hence this heads-up.

Our book selection for the month of July is *Behold the Dreamers*, by Imbolo Mbue.

An Opportunity to Support RAIHN Families in a Different Way

Submitted by Connie Valk

Sometimes opportunities for Social Justice just drop in our lap. This is one of those times. A person outside the church (he has never even been to our church) is impressed with the social justice efforts in our congregation. The Day Center Project has his enthusiastic support.

If we raise \$1,000 over the summer, a friend of the church will contribute a 2 for 1, matching \$2,000 (\$3,000 total) for the Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network's new Day Center to purchase a kitchen cabinet, vacuum cleaner, picnic table, security camera, and other items to make the Center safe and more comfortable.

We have already raised close to \$100 from a few congregation members who learned of the project, so we know that raising \$1000 is no problem over the summer (June through August). Please make your checks payable to First Universalist Church with "**RAIHN Match**" on the memo line. Or you can place cash in an envelope labeled the same and drop it in the offering plate on a Sunday.

Please note that the person offering this matching grant is the same person who made it possible for our church to replace carpeting in the guests' rooms, purchase tables, lamps, fans, and a bookcase filled with books for guests of all ages. We are fortunate to have his support for our social justice work!

*Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network
Keeping families together.
Getting families home for good.*

RAIHN



*Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network
Keeping families together.
Getting families home for good.*

Submitted by Marti Eggers

1500 represents the number of hours volunteers gave to RAIHN at First Universalist during the 2017-2018 church year. And 1500 does not include the time volunteers spent in preparing meals at home or the time they spent traveling to and from the church.

And here are more numbers for RAIHN at First Universalist -

Number Served at First Universalist 2017-2018	
Families	18
Adults	27
Children	28
Total guests	55
Total bed nights	375

What can't be measured is the impact the volunteers have on the lives of families in crisis. What we do know is that as our guests leave on Departure Sunday, they express their gratitude for these wonderful folks who made them feel comfortable, safe and cared for.

1500 hours? Priceless!

Former RAIHN Guest Starts Own Catering Company

Submitted by Marti Eggers

Hello RAIHN Family,

First of all, thank you all so much for helping me and my family in the past. Some of you may have heard that I will be competing in the Dash of Soul competition as soon as it's rescheduled.

The team putting together the event has been phenomenal. They have been supporting us and our passions and goals. Most notably, they are helping us with branding and building a business! As a result, I am launching my own catering company called, "The Occasional Meal!"

I hope to do some healthy meal prep, teach cooking classes and cater smaller events such as corporate lunches and dinner parties and work towards catering larger events.

With Kind Regards, Seantelle

The Occasional Meal Catering



By Seantelle

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/taste-see-sunday-tickets-45925328895>



Submitted by Shirley Bond

Hard to believe that it is June and our church year will be coming to a close. It is totally amazing how much our involvement with Roc/ACTS has impacted our church community. Also working with other houses of worship have made us feel more empowered.

Roc/ACTS President Thomas Demond stated: "The Criminal Justice Taskforce has been working with the Police Accountability Board Alliance securing the backing of City Council President Loretta Scott in improving police accountability." He said that Roc/ACTS will continue to hold public action meetings, meet with council members, and hold press conferences. First Universalist is a member of the Police Accountability Board Alliance along with at least 40 other faith organizations in Rochester.

Childcare, Poverty and Jobs, Bail Reform, Raise the Age, Solidarity Confinement, Advocating for Migrant Workers, and giving our encouragement to the Rochester People's Climate Coalition are all important Roc/ACTS actions.

Starting in September, or sooner, Roc/ACTS would like to get more involved with the movement to expand access for undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses in New York State. We would be joining 12 other states. This would make the roads safer, add sales taxes, gas taxes, registration fees, and ensure that there are fewer uninsured vehicles on the road.

We would also like to be a part of the group that encourages millennials to join Roc/ACTS, as some of these issues affect them also. We would like them to be more involved. They are the most diverse cohorts we have ever had. They are the most accepting of all kinds of people. They view diversity as a way to create unity and they are team member oriented.

So, as you can see, a ton of work has been done, and results are rolling in. The next church year will be an exciting one as we continue to work on improving Rochester for everyone. Call us crazy but we honestly believe that we can make Rochester a model city for new beginnings. It will take time and work but putting us on the map of equality would be super.

We just want to give a special shout-out to Rev. Peggy Meeker who has been an involved and patient cheerleader, Robert Remley, a constant attendee, and special thanks to the FIAC team for their support as we learn more and more about structural racism, strategic racism, dog whistling, red-lining and all the other kinds of racism present today. And a special acknowledgment to the members and friends of First Universalist for their encouragement and friendship. We are proud to be UUs.

GRCC Faith In Action Celebration

Come honor Tom Ruganis and Rev. Peggy Meeker at the GRCC (Greater Rochester Community of Churches) banquet, Tuesday, June 5th at 5:30 pm at the Burgundy Basin Inn. Tom and Rev. Meeker are being recognized for their many contributions to First Universalist Church. They will be honored along with others from various faith groups in our community. Let's fill a table in support of them. Tickets are \$40, see Becky Elwell for more information.



Church Library and Bookstore



Submitted by Phil Ebersole

Library Summer Hours

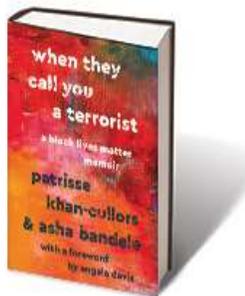
The First Universalist Church library & bookstore will be open June 3rd and 10th and closed June 17th because of the church picnic.

The library will be open only two Sundays during the summer, July 15th and August 19th. We will resume our regular weekly schedule again starting on September 2nd.

When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir

by Patrisse Khan-Cullers and Asha Bandele

Submitted by Phil Ebersole



The First Universalist Church library has been given five copies of *When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir* by Patrice Khan-Cullers, a co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement, and Asha Bandele. They may be checked out Sundays whenever the library is open.

They are the first of a special shelf of books about social justice donated and recommended by the Faith in Action Council.

Drop-in Discussion Schedule

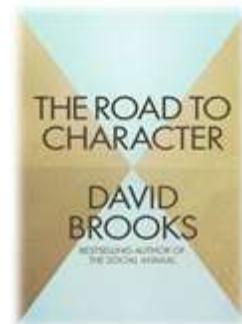
Submitted by Phil Ebersole

Drop-in discussions are held each Sunday in the Chalice Room on the second floor of our church, starting at 9:15 am during the regular church year. On June 24th the discussion will be held after the service.

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.

June 3 | *Job Guarantee*. How would a federal job guarantee work? Is it practical? Phil Ebersole will make a brief presentation and lead a discussion.

June 10 | *Good Character*. David Brooks, in *The Road to Character*, discussed the nature of character as illustrated in the lives of great individuals, including Dorothy Day, General George Marshall, A. Phillip Randolph and Johnny Unitas. Lewis Ward-Baker will lead a discussion of character, based on the ideas in Brooks' book.



June 17 | *Signs of Hope*. What things give you hope for our nation and the world? Phil Ebersole will lead a discussion.

June 24 | TBD

If you take a topic you would like discussed or, better still, would like to lead a discussion, speak to Beth Ares or David Damico.

A Unitarian-Universalist Book Note

***UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE:
An Introduction for Skeptics,
Seekers and Religious Liberals***
by John A. Buehrens (2003)

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

When I attended Sunday school as a boy, I learned Bible stories, and I memorized Bible verses, but I don't think I ever read the Bible itself.

I once read the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, in small increments over a period of a year or two.

I'm glad I waited until I was an adult. It was very much a grown-up book. Many parts of it showed raw human nature in a way that is not suitable for children. I found it very interesting and, in many ways, very different from what I had been led to believe. It was deeply strange and, at the same time, strangely familiar.

I would have benefited from reading John Buehrens' *Understanding the Bible* before I undertook my reading. Buehrens is a former president of the UUA, the author of several books on liberal religion, and currently senior minister of the UU Society of San Francisco.

In this brief book, he summarized, in clear language, the main messages of the different parts of the Bible, how they inspired great writers, philosophers and theologians and what Biblical scholars think about their origins.

I hate to say that reading any book about the Bible is a substitute for reading the Bible itself, but I think anybody who read this book would get something out of it, even if they don't go on to read the Bible.

There are two groups of people that I think would especially benefit from reading the Bible and from reading *Understanding the Bible*.

The first consists of social justice workers who come up against religious political conservatives who quote the Bible in opposition to social reform and human

rights. Such use of the Bible is at worst a distortion of the Bible's message and at best one of several possible interpretations. Religious political liberals should not cede the Bible to their opponents.

The second consists of readers of popular books that give unusual interpretations of the Bible, such as Reza Aslan's *Zealot* or Hugh J. Schonfield's *The Passover Plot*.

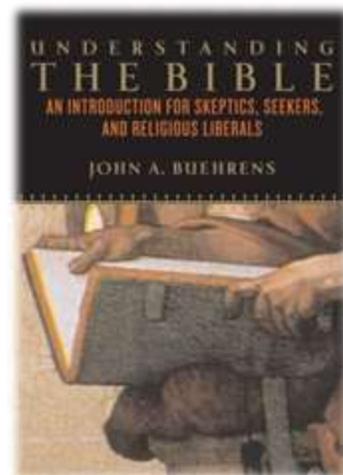
I don't say such interpretations are out of bounds. I say you owe it to yourself to know what the mainstream Biblical scholars say before you make up your mind.

Buehrens' aim in this book was to justify the Bible to atheists, agnostics, feminists and others who are inclined to reject it. He gave equal weight to the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Old and New Testaments. He even addressed self-described Gnostics and others who accept non-canonical books of the New Testament.

I respect what he tried to do, but, for myself, I reject the notion that the things that we at the dawn of the 21st century have arrived at a peak of wisdom that enables us to judge and condemn everything in the past that does not fit out intellectual fashions.

When I read the Gospels, I don't pass judgment on whether Jesus measures up to intellectual ideas currently in circulation. I feel that I am the one who is being judged in my failure to love my neighbor, to share with the poor and to return good for evil.

Understanding the Bible may be bought or borrowed from the church library and bookstore, which is open during coffee hour in the Clara Barton lounge during the regular church year and two Sundays during the summer.



Stewardship 2018

Submitted by Ann Rhody



Thus Do We Covenant - thank you!

Thanks so much to our Stewardship Team: Co-Chairs Richard Reed and Ann Rhody, Paula Marchese and Karl Abbott. Together, we ran a successful Stewardship Campaign with results that support our church's needs. Thanks for your generosity, and thanks also to our Office Administrator Andrea Lewis and our Membership Chair Peter Perine for their assistance. We are still missing a few pledges from last year... did we miss yours? If so, it's never too late to make a pledge. Please contact Ann Rhody via office@uuroc.org or see any member of the finance team.

Staff Hours



Rev. Peggy Meeker - Minister
Tuesday - Thursday
available Monday & Friday (working from home)

Andrea Lewis - Office Administrator
Tuesday thru Friday 9:00 am - 3:45 pm

Brandon Fagan - Sexton
Tuesday & Thursday approx. 9:00 am - 2:00 pm
Sunday approx. 8:30 am - 12:30 pm

House Committee News

Submitted by Tom Ruganis

The Spring Clean-up / Fix-up day was held on Saturday May 5th. An excellent turnout resulted in many small projects and cleaning that were completed. Thanks to all, and especially to Reverend Lane Campbell, that helped out!

The Minister's study is undergoing several improvements. The storage room door with a stained-glass panel has been sent out for repair. It is expected back shortly. Also, the repairs to the flat roof over the Minister's study were completed. After a heavy rain it was determined that the leak had been stopped therefore allowing the plaster repair to be completed. Priming will take place in early June with painting over the summer.

As the Minister's study is one of many areas that could benefit from new paint, a painting day or days will be scheduled for the summer. If you are interested in helping, please let the House Committee know.

The vendor selected for the storm window replacement in the Minister's study has been changed to Rochester Colonial. The main reason is that the previous vendor does not provide installation. However, the two storm windows (for the smaller volunteer office parking lot windows) will still be purchased from Morse Lumber. If these ground level windows can be installed without professional assistance, the plan would be to continue with Morse for the Clara Barton Lounge windows.

Remember that annoying hum and noise during service several weeks back? The problem turned out to be a bad microphone cable. Brighton Sound repaired it at no cost!

It is a sad sign of the times (no pun intended) that a lock had to be placed on the wayside pulpit message board after several signs were stolen.

As always, if you are interested in joining the House committee or helping out with on-going support of the building please feel free to contact anyone on the committee. The House Committee is currently: Tom Ruganis, Chair via office@uuroc.org, Sarah Singal, Marcy Klein, Michael Scott, Ed Deller and Shirley Bond. We would love to hear from you!

First Universalist Church

150 South Clinton Avenue
Rochester, New York 14604

First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY

Nurture the spirit and serve the community

First Universalist Church is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association, a liberal religion with historical roots in the Jewish and Christian traditions.

Worship service begins at 10:30 am Sundays

Minister | The Rev. Peggy Meeker

Minister of Life Span Faith Development | The Rev. Michelle Yates

Music Director

Sexton | Brandon Fagan

Nursery Care Providers | Carol Williams & Sundae Hodge

Office Administrator | Andrea Lewis

Office hours, Tuesday - Friday, 9:00 am - 3:45 pm.

Closed Mondays. Telephone 585.546.2826

Board of Trustees 2017 - 2018

Nancy Gaede (President), Ed Deller (Vice President), Karen Ruganis (Clerk), Kitty Forbush, Janet Rothbeind, Tim Mullins, Eric VanDusen, The Rev. Peggy Meeker (ex-officio)

Editor, *This Week at First Universalist* (digital) and monthly newsletter *Our Outlook*: Andrea Lewis

More information is available on our website: <http://uuroc.org>. The usual deadline for all submissions to Our Outlook is the 20th of each month.

