



Our Outlook

Minister

Rev. Celie Katovitch
minister@uuroc.org

Director of Music

Stacey Yang
music@uuroc.org

Director of Life Span Faith Development

Rev. Michelle Yates
edu@uuroc.org

Office Administrator

Melissa Davies
585.546.2826
office@uuroc.org

Our Outlook Editor

Melissa Davies
uurocnews@gmail.com

First Universalist Church
150 South Clinton Avenue
Rochester, NY 14604

Visit us online www.uuroc.org

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First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY

February 2017

Sunday Services | February 2017

February 5 | *The Gift of Love*

On this Auction Sunday, we reflect on gifts, and on the ways we seek to give and receive love.

- Rev. Celie Katovitch

February 12 | *A Valentine's Day Message*

Rev. David S. Blanchard has served Unitarian Universalist congregations in Lexington, KY, and in Syracuse, Utica, Canton, and Rochester, NY. He is the author of the meditation manual, *A Temporary State of Grace*. We happily welcome Rev. Blanchard to our pulpit.

February 19 | *The Wildness of the Call*

We often talk about finding a calling in terms of making a choice: deciding our life's work by weighing what we're best at and what we most enjoy doing. But what about the times when calling is a summons -- even, perhaps, an inconvenient one?

- Rev. Celie Katovitch

February 26 | *Songs of Blackness*

In honor of Black History Month, Verdis Robinson, Assistant Professor of History and African-American Studies at Monroe Community College, and a member of this congregation, will speak and sing a message exploring highlights of African American history through song. You won't want to miss the knowledge and insight that Verdis brings to the history of our nation and our city, or the beauty of his singing.

AND + NOW + ABIDETH + FAITH
HOPE + LOVE + THESE + THREE + BUT
THE + GREATEST + OF + THESE + IS + LOVE



Pastor's Perspective

Message from Rev. Celie Katovitch

Dear friends,

Liturgy means “the work of the people.” One of the beautiful things that strikes me about our Sunday worship, is its dialogic nature. We create that sacred space together: we sing together, pray together, hold silence together... And I always hope that my sermons aren't so much me “telling” you anything, as much as an invitation to reflect on your own life, as it connects to the stories, poems, and events in the world that are lifted up on a particular day. One of the privileges of being a minister is feeling a sense of connection while standing in the pulpit: looking out to see you singing, thinking, smiling, and in some cases offering tears of recognition. I heard an audible murmur of agreement recently, when I spoke some words of Dr. King: “Those who love peace must learn to organize as effectively as those who love war.”

In the spirit of those words, thank you to everyone who attended our congregational meetings to discuss and vote on the social justice structuring proposal, and to all those who read the report submitted by our discernment team. There were many insightful comments at the meetings. One of you wisely spoke to the fact that changes of this kind are always “messy,” to some degree, because this is unknown territory and we are in some ways learning as we go along. We are going to continue to do this moving forward. There will no doubt be some need to make mistakes and learn from them, and to assess and perhaps recalibrate along the way. However, I truly think we are on our way to doing some wonderful things, and a structure will help set us free to do them in a more focused way. Many of you have mentioned over the years a wish for us to channel our energy to have the greatest impact, and this is one of the goals. Additionally, we hope that taking this path will create an opportunity for everyone in our congregation to have a role in social justice - a place for their gifts and passions. Social justice, like liturgy, is something we create together, and we hope this organizing process will be something that honors everyone's contribution, while harnessing our shared power.

Thank you for your presence and your patience at this exciting time.

In faith,
Celie ❖

Winter Office Hours at Bausch and Lomb

For the month of February, Rev. Celie's community office hours will be held in Wintergarden (first floor of the Bausch and Lomb building, kitty-corner from First Universalist), Thursdays from 1–2. Come enjoy a cup of coffee and listen to birds singing in the palm trees amidst the winter cold! ❖

Food Donations Welcomed

We (Melissa and Celie) keep a small supply of bagged lunches on hand in the church office, to be given out to people in need who knock on our door during the week. (This is the indoor part of our "Clara's Cupboard" outreach that also includes the Little Free Library & Pantry by the garden.) We try to stock these lunches with healthy, high-energy foods, and so we are always very grateful for donations of the following items:

- * Bottled water
- * Cheese and crackers/peanut butter and crackers
- * Granola bars
- * Small packets of trail mix
- * Dried fruit or fruit in individual plastic packages

Thank you for all you do to support this ministry.

~Celie ❖





Walking Together

Submitted by Rev. Michelle Yates, Director of Life Span Faith Development

Our Faith Development theme for February comes from the fifth line of our Affirmation of Faith, “to seek knowledge in FREEDOM.”

What does this phrase, or the idea of FREEDOM mean to you?

I feel this connects closely with our Fourth Principle as Unitarian Universalists, to affirm and promote “a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.” Some say this is the Key Stone among our principles; connecting the more personal principals with those related to the larger world; reminding us that freedom must be tied to responsibility.

In our society, and often in the UU faith tradition, the value, rights and freedoms of the individual are held in high esteem. Just as important is the responsibility we each have to and for each other, and to the responsible use of our freedoms. To not only preserve our personal ability to freely search for our own answers, but to uphold the value of others having the same right and ability.

Martin Luther King Jr. said that, “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” This means that unless we all experience justice and freedom, there is a chance that even those who have it now could lose it in the future.

One of my favorite quotes is from the Spiderman comics. Before Uncle Ben even knows that Peter Parker is Spiderman he tells him that, “with great power comes great responsibility.” We can all be heroes if we use our freedoms responsibility, and try to secure freedom for others.



“Just living is not enough... one must have sunshine, freedom, and a little flower.” -Hans Christian Andersen

“Forgiveness is the key to action and freedom.” -Hannah Arendt

“We, the People, recognize that we have responsibilities as well as rights; that our destinies are bound together;

that a freedom which only asks what's in it for me, a freedom without a commitment to others, a freedom without love or charity or duty or patriotism, is unworthy of our founding ideals, and those who died in their defense.” -Barack Obama

“I would like to be remembered as a person who wanted to be free... so other people would be also free.”

Rosa Parks

“A hero is someone who understands the responsibility that comes with his freedom.” -Bob Dylan ♦



From Age-ing to Sage-ing: Elderhood and Spirituality - March 2017

Submitted by Rev. Michelle Yates

Returning and expanded by popular demand!

So you're getting older. What does that mean? How does that change things? Based on *A Profound New Vision of Growing Older* by Zalman Schachter-Shalomi & Ronald Miller, this 4-session workshop/discussion group will reflect on our personal experiences of aging, look at models of aging from various cultures, and revision our framework for aging and creating meaning in our later lives.

Thursdays, March 2, 9, 16 and 23

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

@ Irondequoit Library, 1290 Titus Ave.

Presented by Rev. Michelle Yates. RSVP's and questions can be directed to Michelle at edu@uuroc.org. ♦

Thanks From a Grateful Congregation

Submitted by the Communications Committee

David Damico has been editor of *Our Outlook* for the last 6 years. He brought the monthly publication into the digital age with a professional layout, eye-catching graphics, and photographs submitted by members of the congregation. He captured the unique look and feel of First Universalist as he assembled each issue.

A good publication is dependent upon good content. David was always diligent in sending out reminders each month so that the content captured a wide variety of church activities, along with regular columns of the Minister and the Director of Life Span Faith Development. David is passing the *Our Outlook* baton to Melissa Davies, our Office Administrator, with this issue.

Thank you, David, for your hard work and dedication - you are greatly appreciated. ❖



David Damico, editor of *Our Outlook* from March, 2011 to January, 2017.

Book Group

Submitted by Shirley Bond

The book choice for February is *Americanah* (originally schedule for January) by Chimamanda Adichie, a Nigerian author who has experienced firsthand the differences and similarities of both the Nigerian culture and the American one. Through her storytelling, she helps us see the importance of understanding race, cultural identification within races and certain quirks associated with each and every race. The book has a suspenseful narrative which helps move the plot along. We hope you will join us on **February 26th at 12 noon** in the Chalice Room on the second floor! It isn't necessary to have read the book, but we hope you have time to fit it into your schedule.

Looking ahead, the Book Club will be discussing *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson on March 26th. This is an extremely readable and important fact-finding book by a very knowledgeable young lawyer. More information coming in March's issue of *Our Outlook*.

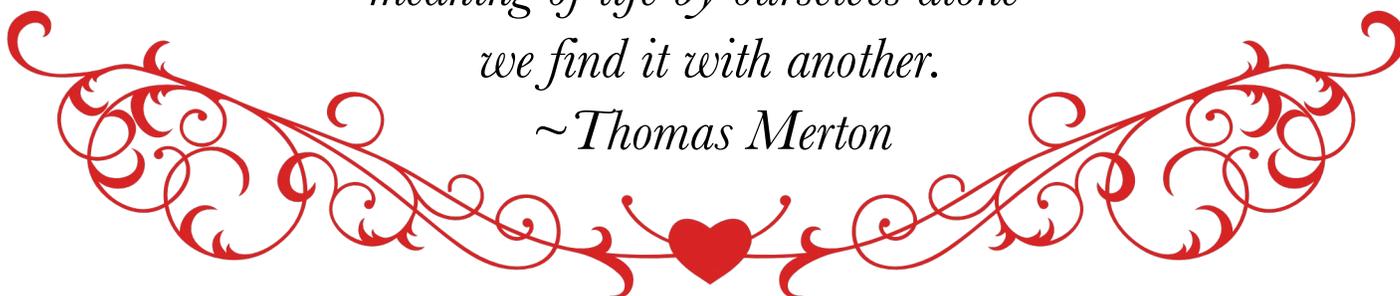


We hope to see you at both book group discussions. Please cancel any vacation plans to warmer climates during those two months as we will surely miss you. If you insist on going, we will see you when we see you!

Contact **Shirley Bond** at Bondshirl1@gmail.com or **Sarah Singal** at ssingal@Rochester.rr.com. ❖

Love is our true destiny. We do not find the meaning of life by ourselves alone - we find it with another.

~ Thomas Merton



Cozy Night Supper Friday, March 3

Submitted by Kathy Russell

Our final COZY NIGHT SUPPER for the 2016-17 church year will be Friday, March 3rd. This dinner, from 5:30 to 7:30, will be held in the Clara Barton Lounge. This will be a potluck and all who are able will provide a simple salad, bread, dessert or main dish (soup/stew/chili/casserole) along with you wonderful camaraderie! At 6:30 we will focus on a program presented by our Race to Justice groups.

Let us know of your ability to attend by signing up on the Religious Education bulletin board in the Clara Barton Lounge or by contacting Kathy Russell at krussel6@frontiernet.net. Your RSVP allows us to prepare appropriately. Child-friendly activities exploring this topic will be arranged if you make a request one week in advance. ❖

EcoJustice News

Submitted by Sarah Singal

Due to the Annual Service Auction on Feb 5th, the EcoJustice Group will meet at noon on February 12th in the Chalice Room. All interested in promoting sustainability of our planet are invited to attend. In particular, anyone who could help with activities related to Earth Day/Week/Month in April would be most welcome! For further information, see Sarah Singal (ssingal@rochester.rr.com) or anyone in the group. ❖

In The Present

Submitted by Kathy Russell

Join us for a meditative Saturday morning, February 25th from 9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. We will focus on various ways we can be "In the Present." Please watch the Adult Education bulletin board, or see Joy Leceese or Kathy Russell (krussel6@frontiernet.net), for more information. ❖

LUUnch BUUnch Returning March 2017

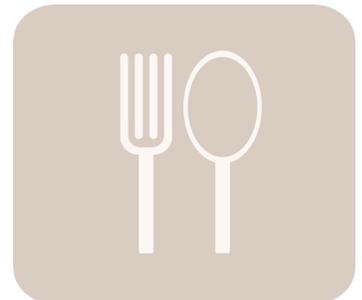
Everyone is welcome at this after-church lunch gathering!

Mediterranean Pita & Kebab House

3047 West Henrietta Road, Rochester, NY

12:30, Sunday, March 5th

Please place your order at the counter (Dutch treat). If Dick and Joyce Gilbert know in advance that you're coming, we may be able to arrange a buffet for greater choice and lower cost. Contact Joyce at JTGilbert@frontiernet.net.



Social Justice Plate News *Submitted by Shirley Bond*

The Social Justice Plate committee wishes thank the congregation for their wide support for Metro Justice. We collected \$557.00 on January 15th! Words cannot express our full appreciation. We will be hand delivering them a check at their annual meeting.

The plate collection for February 19th has been selected, and the recipient is Interfaith Impact. Many of us are familiar with this group of clergy leaders who lobby in Albany for human rights equality. This hearty band of religious leaders is constantly challenging the status quo.

I will quote Dick Gilbert, who quoted Martin Luther King when he demanded there should be a "fiery urgency of now." Again, thank you all. ~ Becky Elwell, Marcia Weaver, Shirley Bond ❖

Living Our Values, Making A Difference

Submitted by Newcomb Losh

Bridge Home Meal

Carole Hoffman organized a dinner on Dec. 22 at the Bridge Home for people who are homeless. Bringing home-cooked food and serving dinner were Dick Gilbert, Becky Elwell, Joyce Gilbert, and Bill Elwell.

Janet Clark-Hazlett served beverages and home-cooked brownies.



Photo by Carole Hoffman

RAIHN Week

Approximately 70 volunteers from First Universalist, the Southeast Rochester Catholic Communities (SERCC) churches, and the Greater Rochester community provided a welcoming atmosphere to a group of families who were homeless during the RAIHN week that started Jan. 1. Preparing the Sunday RAIHN dinner were (l to r) **Ed Deller, Carole Hoffman** and **Jennifer Maxa**.

RAIHN volunteer **Daniel Maxa** dried and put away dishes as **Carole Hoffman** washed them.



MetroJustice Pop-up Protest

On Jan. 12, **Newcomb Losh** (rt) joined a pop-up protest at Rochester's Federal Building called by Metro Justice to stop Andy Puzder, whose Cabinet nomination for Labor Secretary hearing was underway in the US Senate.



ACLU Workshop

Karen Ruganis (ctr rt, during a break) attended the ACLU Western NY workshop "Know Your Rights While Protesting" at Downtown United Presbyterian Church on Jan. 7 in anticipation of joining the Women's March on Washington on Jan 21.

Have an action photo or two of our members and friends being inclusive, living our values or making a difference? Send them to Newcomb Losh at jnewcomb.losh@yahoo.com.



In Gratitude to the Congregation

Submitted by Marti Eggers



Last month, First Universalist hosted four temporarily homeless families in our church, honoring the covenant this congregation entered into more than a decade ago with Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network (RAIHN): to provide families with safe shelter and nutritious meals for a week at a time, four times per year. For 14 years this congregation has supported RAIHN by providing caring volunteers, as well as much-needed financial and moral support. RAIHN at First Universalist is truly a congregational commitment.

Our recent guests were deeply appreciative of the hospitality and warmth shown to them, not only by the volunteers but also by others who passed through during the week and on Sunday. They expressed their gratitude not only in words to the volunteers but also in writing. Here is what they wrote on a card that read THANKS SO MUCH FOR ALL YOU DO:

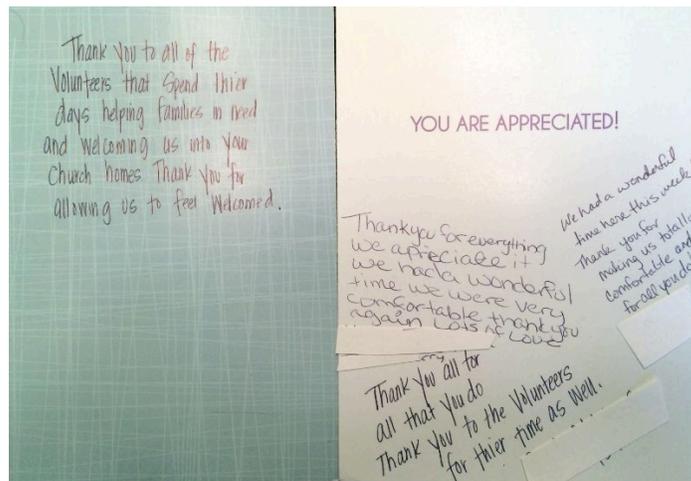
Thank you to all of the Volunteers that spend their days helping families in need and welcoming us into your church home. Thank you for allowing us to feel welcomed.

Thank you for everything. We appreciate it. We had a wonderful time. We were very comfortable. Thank you again. Lots of love

Thank you for all that you do. Thank you to the Volunteers for their time as well.

We had a wonderful time here this week! Thank you for making us totally comfortable and for all you do!

Thank you, Congregation! ❖



Next Host Week at First Universalist

• March 26th – April 2nd



Path to Membership Session - April 1

Submitted by Connie Valk

Do your beliefs fit the principles that guide us? We believe in:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

If so, consider becoming a member of First Universalist Church. A Path to Membership session will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 1st, led by Rev. Celie Katovitch and church leaders. You can sign up by contacting Connie Valk at cvalk@frontiernet.net or leave a message at 585-467-3191. ❖



Thanks and Farewell

From the Finance Team

This month we bid a fond farewell to our Bookkeeper, Monica Blank. Monica has been with us for 6 years and has helped keep our finances in order, especially during challenging times. Many thanks, Monnie, and best wishes to you!

Our annual Service Auction is February 5. Plan to stay after the service and enjoy the fun!

The finance team will soon begin to develop the 2017-18 budget. Do you have ideas or input? Is your committee planning something special that will require a change in funding? If there is anything you'd like to let us know, please contact Ann Rhody (annrhody@gmail.com) or any member of the Finance Team by the end of February.

Our generosity as a congregation continues to be a source of pride. We collected \$613 on Christmas Eve to support REACH Advocacy for Bridge Home. What a difference we make in our community!

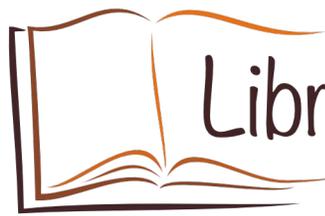
Our website has a new finance feature! You can now request reimbursement or bill payment for budgeted expenses by visiting our website (uuroc.org) and scrolling to the bottom of the page. Click "members" and you'll find the online form and instructions. This replaces the "green sheet" check request forms we've used in the past. Please contact treasurer Dick Shroyer (treasurer@uuroc.org) with any questions. ❖

Stewardship 2017

Submitted by Heather Jones

It's coming! Excitement is building!

Stewardship Sunday will be on April 9th, 2017, and if you would like a hint about this year's theme, check out hymn number 121 in the gray hymnal. Read the words; they say it all! ❖

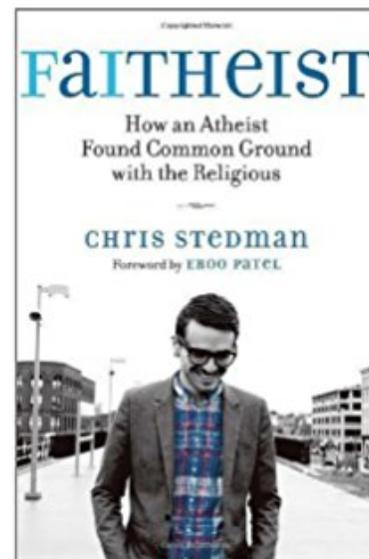


Library News

Submitted by Philip Ebersole

Can Universalists Learn from Atheists?

Can a non-religious person live/work in an interfaith environment? Can we resolve humanity's huge religious challenges? Or, as the author of one of our new library books asks us, "What are the benefits of working across lines of religious difference?" Chris Stedman explores these and other challenges and offers a hand of friendship to "people of all faith and no faith" in his challenging and inspiring book, *Faithist: How an Atheist Found Common Ground with the Religious*. Find common ground with all those you meet. Find Chris' book at **call number 201.5 S.**



The First Universalist Church library and bookstore are open each Sunday, except in the summer, during coffee hour for browsing, borrowing, and buying.

The books along the wall shelves are part of our lending library. Books may be borrowed for four weeks by members, and also by friends who have attended long enough to have name tags. If you have an overdue book, we'd appreciate you returning it.

The books on the freestanding shelves are part of our bookstore. We have donated books for sale for 50 cents each and purchased books for sale at half price. We also have a shelf of free children's books and a free magazine exchange. We appreciate donations of books in good condition that you think others would be interested in reading. ❖

Drop-In Discussion Schedule

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

Drop-in discussions are held at 9:15 a.m. (except during the summer) each Sunday in the Chalice Room on the second floor of our church. Sometimes our discussions are based on certain books or articles, but you don't have to read anything or do any advance preparation to participate. Just drop in. People of all viewpoints are welcome to make presentations or join in the discussions.

February 5 | *What Is Humility?* Humility is a Christian virtue, and pride is at the top of the list of the Christian seven deadly sins. But what exactly is humility? What are the signs of true and false humility? Can you be too humble? Is self-esteem different from pride? Is there a conflict between self-esteem and humility? Can you have too much self-esteem? Phil Ebersole, who is not especially humble, will lead the discussion.

February 12 | *Shop Before You Drop.* We'll get an overview of issues worth considering in planning end of life decisions. Marcy Klein, Board President of Funeral Consumers Alliance of Greater Rochester and board member Elizabeth Osta will facilitate discussion on burial options, cremation info, green burial alternative as well as tips for buyers in what to look for in planning and more. Your next of kin will be so grateful for your thoughtful planning! Plan to attend. Before you drop!

February 19 | *The Future.* Que sera, sera. A popular song of the 60's and sound track for an ad on television in English means: Whatever will be, will be; the future's not ours to see. Well, we can't help thinking about the future. Are you pessimistic or optimistic, and is either position tenable? Bill Elwell will lead a discussion of what we fear or relish about what lies ahead.

February 26 | *Judicial Philosophy.* The U.S. Constitution is the supreme law of the land, but it doesn't interpret himself. Legal scholars have varied philosophies of interpretation - originalism, textualism, legal pragmatism and judicial restraint, to name a few. Phil Ebersole, who is not especially learned in the law, will make a presentation and lead a discussion.

If you wish to have a topic discussed or, better still, are willing to lead a discussion, speak to Phil Ebersole. ❖

House Committee News

Submitted by Tom Ruganis

The kitchen dishwasher repair is now complete.

Good news on the green energy front. The Board has approved replacement of the incandescent bulbs in the sanctuary with LED bulbs and the bulbs have been ordered. The cost has come down and the technology has improved to the point that this became an easy decision. All of the bulbs will be a bit brighter than we have now with the bulbs under the balconies being slightly dimmer than the rest. Thank you, Michael Scott, for leading this effort. If you would like to help with lowering the chandeliers to replace the bulbs, let the House Committee know.

The Office renovation has been delayed once again due to our contractor availability. Hopefully this will be completed soon!

The Clara Barton Lounge renovation committee has started work on the proposal. The interior designer has already been an asset to the group and many good ideas have been discussed. Please continue to stay tuned.

A defective motion sensor switch was replaced in one of the two restrooms in the Religious Education wing.

As always, if you are interested in the above or have any other repair or project you would like to see completed or would like to take on, please let anyone on the committee know. The Committee is currently: Tom Ruganis, Chair (tom.ruganis@frontier.com), Sarah Singal, Marcy Klein, Mike VanArsdale, Michael Scott, and Ed Deller. We would love to hear from you! ❖



First Universalist Church

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 from the Jewish and Christian traditions.

Worship service begins at 10:30am Sundays

Minister | Rev. Celie Katovitch

Director of Life Span Faith Development | Rev. Michelle Yates

Music Director | Stacey Yang

Sexton | Brandon Fagan

Nursery Care Provider | Carol Williams

Office Administrator | Melissa Davies

Office hours, Tuesday - Friday, 9-3:15. Closed Mondays. Telephone 585.546.2826

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Editor, *This Week at First Universalist* (digital) and monthly newsletter *Our Outlook*: Melissa Davies.

More information is available on our website: <http://uuroc.org>.