



Our Outlook

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Sunday Services | September 2021

September 5 | *Out of the Wilderness*

We so want to come back to church in person, but we will not do it until everyone feels safe and okay about it. A service to honor both Zoom and In-Person services with Patti, Tom, and Kitty.

— *Kitty Forbush, Patti Goodwin, Thomas Williams*

September 12 | *We Are Here**

A water ingathering service or arrival to a new church year, and to worshipping together in-person and online at First Universalist Church. A service of returning, grounding, and acknowledging all that has changed. Please bring some water to pour to symbolize your experiences of the last year-and-a-half. If you plan to join online, please send a picture of your favorite body of water to minister@uuroc.org to be used in the service. **We will be worshipping in-person at the Riverbend shelter in Genesee Valley park, and online via Zoom!**

— *Rev. Lane Campbell*

Worship Times & Topics for September 19 & 26 TBA

Editor's Note: With shifting as of late with COVID, our worship plans may be changing. We apologize for the lateness of the newsletter this month, and urge you to keep an eye on our website, Facebook page, and emails concerning updates/developments on this changing situation.

Thank you for your patience and understanding!

❖ **Service begins at 10am** ❖

*Worship will be meeting online, with some hybrid services (marked with *).*

Please join us – Internet link: <https://zoom.us/j/131764422>;

Phone number: 646-558-8656 with Meeting ID: 131 764 422. ❖

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We Are Still Here

Message from Rev. Lane Campbell

Well, this is not exactly how I expected this fall to start. How about you?

Dear ones, we have been making our way towards what we know, towards how things have been before. We have been masking. We have been vaccinating. We have been social-distancing. We have been working and parenting and schooling from home. We have been grieving. We have been assessing safety, risk, and connection. And likely we did all of these things with the expectation that we could return to life and church and community as it was before. But here we are. We are not yet there. I am not sure we will get there.

What I do know is that this is a time for Presence. Presence with one another through conversation and connection. Presence to what is before us, remaining right here, now, doing the next right thing, but not getting too far down the path. Presence with ourselves in sitting with questions like: How am I feeling today? What is the state of my heart today? What do I need? Where am I tender?

We are still here. A phrase often uttered by folks who have survived more than any person should bear. I first heard “*We are still here,*” from Black Trans elder, Miss Major Griffin-Gracey, after she had survived incarceration, oppression, violence, and deep hurt. She shared this phrase after a lifetime of people attempting to erase her existence, after many attempts from others to injure and even to kill her.

Perhaps a mantra for these times would be to remind ourselves, “*I am still here.*” Something we can say to ourselves and then notice what it brings up in us. Is it gratitude? Dread? Grief? Presence? Some other response entirely? Let’s try this spiritual practice together and see what it brings us.

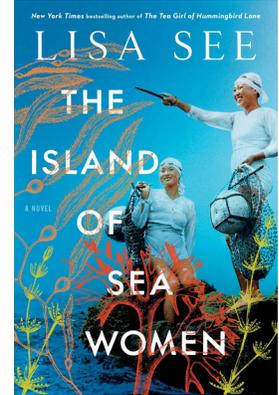
Please know, if you are grieving and feel fearful and uncertain, you are not alone. Please know we are still here. Still here together as First Universalist Church. Still here together as a community. Let us be present to each other and to ourselves in this new moment we find ourselves in. ❖

Book Group: We Are Back!

Submitted by Sarah Singal & Shirley Bond

The book group is starting up again. How we have missed you all!

A few of us have decided that for September 26, we will have a discussion about the historical novel, “The Island of Sea Women” by Lisa See. The novel takes us on an adventure to South Korea and contains all the elements of page-turning good fiction. This book is hard to put down. Perfect for the waning days of summer.



During our hour together it would be great if we could pick out some titles for the year. We hope to meet the last Sunday of each month via Zoom. By the way, did I mention that you do not have to have read the book to join? ALL are welcome!

If you have any questions please talk to Sarah Singal or Shirley Bond. If you have read a good book lately share it with us at Book@uuroc.org! ❖

Racial Justice: Where Do We Go From Here?

Submitted by Elizabeth Osta

Please join Rev. Lane Campbell at a Zoom event sometime this spring for a Church wide strategic and formative conversation about First Universalist's next moves towards racial justice. Where have we been? What do you need? Where are we going? This will be a time of appreciative inquiry, discernment, and honesty about what we would like to see happen with our shared efforts to address racial injustice. ❖

Leadership Assembly: *Save the Date!*

Submitted by Tess McFarland, Board President

Are you a current church leader or perhaps a future church leader? Please plan to attend UURoc's annual Leadership Assembly on Saturday morning, October 23. While our bylaws define leaders as committee chairs, your Board of Trustees welcomes a broader definition and seeks to nurture future leaders. We invite you to identify as a leader and come! ❖

NYUUI: UUROC Joins a New Network of UUs to Build Justice

Submitted by Connie Valk for the Faith in Action Council

Built on a foundation created by *Interfaith Impact NYS* (IINYS), an organization which Rev. Richard Gilbert led as president for many years, *New York Unitarian Universalist Justice* (NYUUI – pronounced “nudge”) is creating a new network for advancing justice and UU values across our state. Following in the footsteps of IINYS, NYUUI will:

- Connect Unitarian Universalists with one another and with partners who share our values;
- Learn from those most engaged in the struggle for justice and follow their lead;
- Activate collective power to advocate for a just New York.

The new organization will amplify the justice work of our congregations, and continue the IINYS record for a progressive, moral voice in Albany.

Our Board of Trustees voted to become one of NYUUI's founding members. Tess McFarland Porter, our church's president said after the August Board Meeting, “NYUUI is an exciting opportunity for us to carry on Dick Gilbert's legacy of activist leadership and political influence. Achieving justice requires organization.”

To learn more about NYUUI, and to sign up for their emails, please visit nyuij.org. ❖

A note from the COVID Task Force

Submitted by Steve Munson, Chair of COVID Task Force

At its most recent monthly meeting, your Board of Trustees voted to establish a new church committee, the COVID Task Force. The members of that committee have actually been meeting frequently since late spring to attempt to match the church's plans with the demands of the ever evolving Coronavirus. We are grateful for all the input from members of the congregation and are especially pleased to have heard from so many at our recent listening session on Sunday August 22.

At our most recent meeting, the Task Force reviewed your comments as well as information from Monroe County Health Department and guidance from the UUA. With much sadness we concluded that at this time it is not safe to use our church building for group activities, including in-person worship.

We also recommended that anyone using our building should wear a mask unless isolated in a closed office space. These conclusions are not ones we expected to reach at this point in the pandemic. The *very high* level of community transmission in our area demanded this response.

We have very little influence over the course of this epidemic. Observing public health advice is the most we can do. The Task Force joins with the UUA in encouraging all who are eligible or whose health allows to be fully vaccinated, including the third or booster immunization when it is available and appropriate.

As the virus evolves and our plans for our church's response develop, we will be in close touch with you. We are planning another Coffee Hour listening session on Sunday September 26, but you will hear from us before that through Sunday announcements and regular email updates.

Thank you for joining us in our effort to find ways to be together while maintaining safe respect for the demands of this virus. ❖

Drop-In Discussion

Submitted by Beth Ares

Current drop-in discussions are held each Tuesday evening from 6:30 to 7:30pm via the church Zoom account. Contact DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org for the Zoom link, or look on uuroc.org!

Sometimes our discussions are based on books/articles, but you don't have to do any preparation to participate. Just drop in. People of all viewpoints are welcome to make presentations or join.

September 7 | *UU Theology/5 Smooth Stones*

In August, Rev. Michelle gave a sermon about UU Theology through the framework of James Luther Adams' "*Five Smooth Stones of Liberalism*." What thoughts or questions did this bring up for you about UU Theology, our faith, and faith in action in the world? Don't worry if you missed the sermon. Rev. Michelle will review the highlights to start us off.

September 14 | *Urban Education that Works*

Come learn about an urban school in the heart of downtown Rochester that uses a successful National model to provide cutting edge education: Nativity Preparatory Academy. Learn what makes it work and who makes it work. You're sure to be impressed. Speaker Jillian Beaman and colleagues present.

September 21 | *Critical Race Theory*

A lot of people blame something called Critical Race Theory for our troubles, and a few see it as a solution to our troubles. Phil Ebersole has taken the trouble to read books by scholars—mainly law school professors—who advocate this school of thought. He'll deliver a report and lead a discussion

September 28 | *A Person First*

Join Speaker Teena Fitzroy as she recounts how she has overcome the obstacles and challenges that come with being a person first who happens to have a disability. Her witty insightful talk delights audiences and warms hearts! Author of "*Teena's Trunk*". Teenfitzroy.com

Do you have a topic for us? Contact our team members with your Drop-In Discussion proposals: DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org. ❖

Finance News & Notes

Me? Get Involved in Church Finance?!

(Spoiler Alert: You Already ARE)

Submitted by Ann Rhody, Finance Chair

For many people, church finance is an area they'd just as soon leave to the "experts: "people who create, understand, and can explain the spreadsheets and trends, and who are "good at math."

But guess what? You already ARE involved in church finance, whether you can read a spreadsheet or not. Our church is doing well – NOT because of the accounting systems, but because it is a vibrant and active community which feeds the spiritual needs of the congregation. And that's you! The financial arm of the church exists to fuel the mission of the church: to nurture the spirit and serve the community. You are the drivers of that mission – we on the finance team simply help to ensure that our financial resources work to support it.

A church can have a whole lot of money and very little impact in the community or to its members. Our church is fortunate that we attract people who want to be involved, make a difference, grow spiritually... and are willing to support those things. So whether it's a few bucks in the collection basket or on Paypal, a pledge, helping with a service, or simply attending regularly, YOU are contributing to church life and to our financial health!

Now...having said all of this, we would also welcome folks to be involved in the Finance team in a more direct way. You don't need specialized training in finance in order to be helpful! We can always use help, for example, with planning our Service Auction (yes, we are hoping for in-person this year!), or looking at ways to communicate with the congregation. For more information, please get in touch! You can email finance@uuroc.org to start. ❖

House News

Submitted by Ed Deller

The remodel of the RE/Music office on the second floor has been completed! This creates a more accessible children's worship space since the current area on the third floor isn't accessible via the elevator.

SAVE THE DATE: On Oct. 30, we plan to have a Fall Clean Up Day. Our new custodian has been sprucing up the church in prep for our reopening, but we will need to do more to prepare the church for winter. Of course this will be dependent upon the COVID-19 situation at that time.

Thanks again to Tom Ruganis, Karen Dau, and Sarah Singal for weekly checks of the church. ✦

BEFORE



DURING



AFTER



Photo credit: Emma Barry



Rural & Migrant Ministry: *Beth Ares is honored at Open House*

Submitted by Connie Valk

Beth Ares was honored at the Rural & Migrant Ministry Open House in August by receiving the Jim Schmidt Award.

First Universalist Church has supported Rural & Migrant Ministry (RMM) in many ways through the years. Beth Ares became even more involved when she moved closer to the western NY center on Lyons.

She has served on a committee which coordinated efforts of RMM with the Episcopal campus on which the center is housed, driven many undocumented farmworkers to detention hearings, even cleaned up the campus when discarded yard branches from a neighboring property were dumped there.

During the award ceremony, Beth honored Jim Schmidt, who taught farmworkers about the law, founded the Farmworker Women's Institute, and raised awareness about racial profiling, and pesticide education.

In her thank you speech, Beth said in part,

“Black lives matter, Brown lives matter, people who don't speak English matter, people who are undocumented matter, people who grow and harvest our food matter, and my community matters...the opportunity to volunteer for Rural & Migrant Ministry also means that MY life matters, and for that, I thank all of you.” ❖

FPGROC (RAIHN): *Covenant Renewed*

Submitted by Chris DeGolyer

Good news! First Universalist's Board of Trustees has renewed our covenant with Family Promise of Greater Rochester (FPGROC) to continue as a host church until December 2022.

For the rest of 2021, we will not be sheltering guests at our church; the FPGROC guests will continue to stay in six apartments.



First Universalist has one more host week this year: October 25-31. During our host week, First Universalist and its support churches will supply the families with some food staples such as milk, bread, lunch items, and snacks. We will also give guest families gift cards to Walmart so that they can buy additional food.

In 2022, we hope that the pandemic will be behind us and that we'll return to sheltering FPGROC guests in our church.

The shelter program is just one of FPGROC's programs for preventing homelessness. As of August 6, 2021, FPGROC has helped 272 families with its prevention, diversion, and rehousing programs.

If you haven't volunteered for FPGROC before and would like to know more, please consider attending a volunteer orientation

• **Level I: How We Work, Who We Serve, & The Role of The Volunteer** on Tuesday, September 7, from Noon to 1:30pm. RSVP to beth@fpgroc.org.

This orientation will prepare you to volunteer with other church members when we once again host families in our church. ❖

Hybrid Summer Worship with First Universalist!

Photo Credit: Emma Barry & Congregation Members



EcoJustice News

Submitted by Sarah Singal



If you could do something POWERFUL to help draw down greenhouse gases that are messing up our planet, and which would especially help marginalized communities in our country and around the world, and if it took only minutes and cost you nothing, would you do it? You can! Will YOU?

As you are probably aware, on Aug. 9 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, comprised of numerous climate scientists from many nations, released an updated assessment of what is happening and projected to happen to Earth with varying rises in CO2 emissions and global warming. For more info go to ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-working-group-i/.

This report was released just as the U.S. Congress is debating a large reconciliation bill. This is the largest bill that Congress could get through this year; will it have bold climate solutions or just minor tweaks? Bold is the only option that can prevent irreversible warming, and the ante has just been upped. This moment gives each of us unusual power.

This post-COVID moment will not happen again. Now is the chance to enact legislation to place the US in responsible leadership in solving the climate crisis, relevant to the current precarious state, instead of just being one of the countries bringing on the crisis.

Call your elected officials! They are going to vote on legislation. They are listening and want to know what their constituents think. Here are links from:

Citizen's Climate Lobby:

- *Ask Your Senator for a Price on Carbon* (citizensclimatelobby.org/senate/)

- *Ask Your Rep. for a Price on Carbon* (citizensclimatelobby.org/house/)

Or if you prefer the message from The Sierra Club: *The new IPCC report raises climate alarm bells. Tell Congress to act!* (<https://tinyurl.com/4xjtf55y>)

And pass on this message or the links to friends and relatives. Thanks in advance for using your power!

The EcoJustice Group meets the first Sunday of the month at 12:30pm, in the back of the Sanctuary, starting October 3. All are welcome! Just come and/or email FIAC@uuroc.org. ♦

Our Anonymous Donor's Amount was Matched!

Submitted by Connie Valk

We raised \$2,700! The total so far, including donor match and congregation gifts is \$5,200. We are grateful, and give thanks to those who contributed to help support community efforts to raise awareness of the history of racism in our community.

The funds will go toward our Church Project led by First Universalist Initiative for Racial Equity (F.I.R.E.) efforts to address racism in our Community by tying into a part of the Civil Rights Heritage Site supporting a Black Story-Telling Project. ♦



Gardens of First Universalist

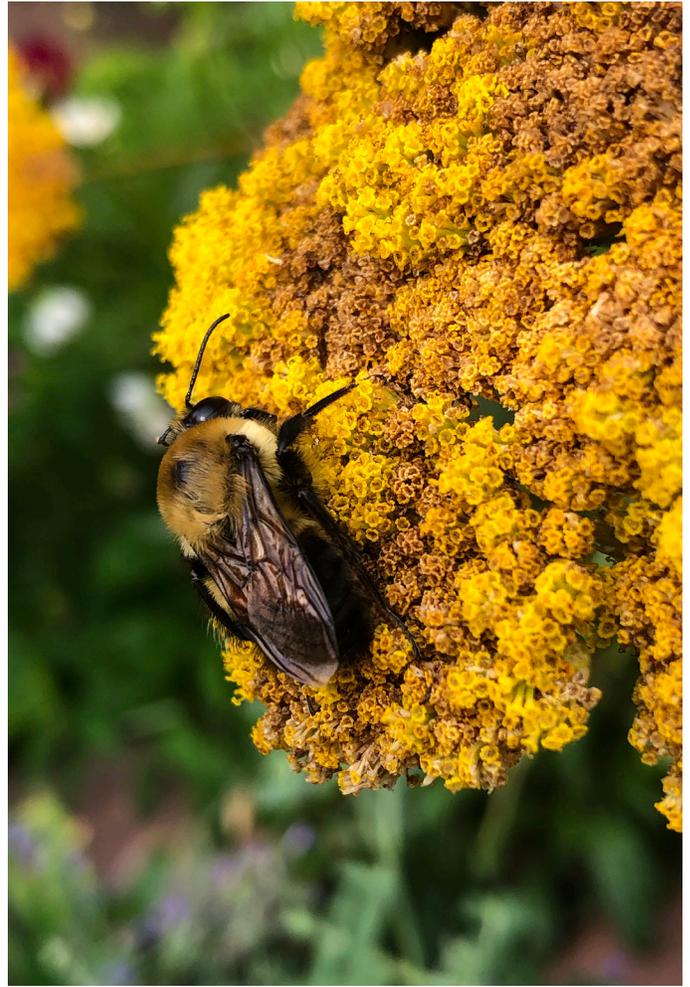
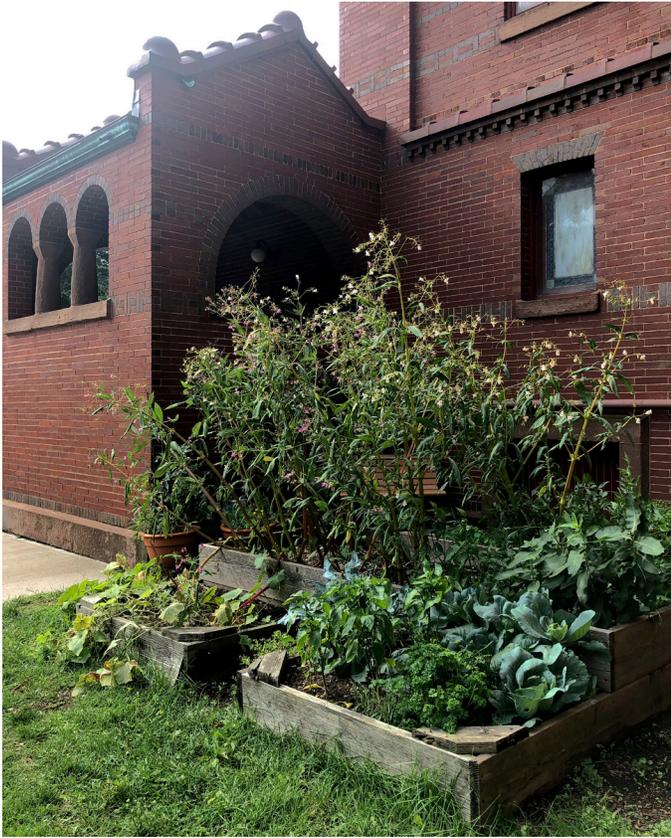


Photo credit: Emma Barry



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.

Worship service begins at 10am on Sundays

Minister | Rev. Lane Campbell

Minister of Life Span Faith Development |
Rev. Michelle Yates

Music Director | Brock Tjosvold

Office Manager | Emma Barry

Nursery Care Providers |
Carol Williams & Sundae Hodge

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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.