

## 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** | Celie Katovitch
- Minister of Religious Education** | Michelle Yates
- Music Director** | Bryan Holten
- Sexton** | Brandon Fagan
- Nursery Care Provider** | Carol Williams
- Office Administrator** | Kris White

**Office hours**, Tuesday through Friday, 8:30am–2:45pm. **Telephone** 585.546.2826

### Board Of Trustees

Ed Deller (President), Joy Leccese, Shirley Bond, Michael Scott, Michael VanArsdale, Howard Spindler, Janet Rothbeind.

Editor, Weekly *eOutlook*: Kris White; Monthly paper *Our Outlook*, David Damico/Marcy Klein  
More information is available on our website: <http://uuroc.org>



# Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

March 2015

## Sunday Services | March 2015

**March 1** | Reverend AminaLinda Hall is our pulpit guest for Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>. Reverend Hall will be offering the sermon, “How can we build understanding, practice and mastery to fulfill the purpose of our life?”

Reverend Hall is a minister in the Church of All, Sufi Order International/North America. She officiates the Universal Worship service at the Sufi Order of Rochester Center for Sufi Studies.

### March 8 | *A Modest Proposal*

I once had a friend who sat down to write the “UU scriptures.” The story of how the project fared, and more. (In the third and final sermon of our series on prayer, we turn to lectio divina, the practice of devotional reading of sacred texts.)  
-Rev. Celie Katovitch

### March 15 | *Music Sunday*

A gospel worship service, with strong UU flavor. The choir will sing works inspired by African-American traditions, including André Thomas’s stirring introit “Keep Your Lamps,” Paul Halley’s foot-tapping “Sound Over All Waters,” and two anthems by living African-American composer Mark Miller. An arrangement of “Ella’s Song,” originally performed by Sweet Honey in the Rock, inspires us to challenge the status quo of race relations in the United States.

### March 22 | *There Goes the Neighborhood!*

Explore a nearby neighborhood transformed by the Rochester Race Riots of 1964 and ponder what happens when second-class residents rebel--an episode in our history that echoes recent events in Ferguson, Missouri. Could the application of some Unitarian Universalist principles help to resolve a nationwide crisis?  
-Verdis LeVar Robinson, lay speaker.

### March 29 | *The Donkey in the Crowd and the Elephant in the Room*

Through Palm Sunday runs the theme of peace as the heart of faith. Yet, in this year that has seen the rise of ISIS, an old, persistent question arises with new urgency: what is the relationship between religion and violence?  
-Rev. Celie Katovitch

Sunday Worship service begins at 10:30am.

If we need to cancel sunday church services due to weather or other emergency we will notify 13WHAM-TV and 13WHAM.com. If you are in doubt about whether the service is being held you can check there.

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### Minister

Rev. Celie Katovitch  
minister@uuroc.org

### Director of Music

Bryan Holten  
music@uuroc.org

### Director of Life Span Faith Development

Michelle Yates  
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### Our Outlook

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### First Universalist Church

150 South Clinton Avenue  
(corner of Court St.)  
Rochester, NY 14604

### Visit us online [www.uuroc.org](http://www.uuroc.org)

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## Pastor's Ponderings

Message from Rev. Celie Katovitch

I offer you the following poem by May Sarton, titled *March Mad*:

The strangely radiant skies have come  
To lift us out of winter's gloom,  
A paler more transparent blue,  
A softer gold light on fresh snow.  
It is a naked time that bares  
Our slightly worn-down hopes and cares,  
And sets us listening for frogs,  
And sends us to seed catalogues  
To bury our starved eyes and noses  
In an extravagance of roses,  
And order madly at this season  
When we have had enough of reason.

Sound familiar?

I see it in my own household. The seed packets are out and scattered across the table, to have at the ready when the ground thaws. They inspire my imagination with the hope of flowers. I have my ear out for the frogs (or at least, the earlier sounds of icicles melting, brooks thawing, a few tentative birds chirping). I am on the watch for signs of green grass or pale crocuses poking through the snow.

It takes a strong, some might say fanciful, optimism to believe that spring arrives with March in upstate New York. But like Sarton I've "had enough of reason," my rational powers overcome by the longing for spring.

Apparently I'm not alone. A few days ago various newscasters--each with tongue firmly in cheek--announced that the town of Merrimack, New Hampshire, had sworn out an arrest warrant for Punxutawney Phil, citing his failure to disclose the amount of snow that would come with his predicted "six more weeks of winter." (In case you're curious about Phil's fate, he was soon offered asylum by the caretakers of a ski resort in a neighboring town, whose patrons were grateful for the snow-covered slopes. So he remains a free man... though I imagine not a few Rochesterians will have a bone to pick with him if he should ever pass this way.)

In these weeks of lightening skies and brightening grays, may we be thankful for fancies, "extravagances" and playfulness-- these things that see us through the unreasonable winter. Let us live in the liveliness of longing, its promise and its beauty, its ability to wake us up from hibernation of the spirit. May we rejoice in the light, and the lightheartedness, of this community.

In faith, – Celie ❖

## Special Worship Opportunities March–April

### Evening Vespers Service

On **Friday, March 20th** (the Spring Equinox), at 7:00 PM, there will be an evening vespers service. This will be a short (approximately 1/2 hour) service of singing and silence, a chance to renew our spirits and to welcome the return of light and warmth after this long winter. UU in flavor, the service is inspired by Taize and other contemplative traditions, in which short songs or chants are sung meditatively so that the words, repeated, sink in and awaken our hearts and minds. All are welcome. Stay tuned to the weekly electronic announcements for further details.

### Tenebrae Service

On **Wednesday, April 1st**, at 7:00 PM, there will be a Tenebrae service. "Tenebrae" is Latin for "shadows." This is a moving service of readings, hymns, and instrumental music centered on the theme of sacred darkness-- the darkness that is the pathway to the hope and light of Easter. It is a an occasion to honor the parts of our lives that are shadowed by loss, and to open to the mystery of healing. Lights and candles are extinguished through the service, until, at its close, only the light of the chalice remains. All are welcome. ❖



## Walking Together:

Director of Life Span Faith Development

Submitted by Michelle Yates, DRE

Many people enjoy talking about the weather; it has certainly become a focus of conversation lately. I've heard that if you were born after 1965 you won't remember a winter that was this cold for this long. Most everyone have had some activity cancelled due to the recent weather, or has had to consider if it was safe to go out. How often do we see this dilemma in our own life experiences: do I accept it, do I push through, or how do I figure out what to do?

The "Serenity Prayer" comes to mind: "Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

People in our area of the world tend to pride themselves on their resilience to difficult winters, but sometimes in winter, and in the cold dark times in our lives, it's good to cultivate the practice of *acceptance*. But, *how* do we practice acceptance?

Psychologist Marsha Linehan offers a model of Radical Acceptance. She says, "Radical acceptance just means that you acknowledge reality for what it is. If you accept the reality of the situation, you can stop dwelling on situations you have no control over (and even those you do) and move [forward] with your life."

Blogger "RaisingMyBoyChick" says, "Radical acceptance is not about "looking on the bright side" or "staying positive" — it's seeing exactly what is, even all the [hard stuff], and just... accepting the fact of its existence.

It's not about defeat or avoiding change, but rather makes the changes we're trying to implement SO much more effective, because we're not wasting energy denying what is, or making it out to be something it's not."

Your challenge for March is to give Radical Acceptance a try. Notice when you are not happy with things or people as they are. Take a moment before charging forward to fix or react. Breathe. Accept or allow the person or situation to be as they are right now, without judgment.

In what ways do you see Acceptance or Radical Acceptance as a spiritual practice in your life?

Keep the conversation going! ❖

Michelle



## Adult Religious Education Offering: "Living Our Values from the Inside Out"

This two session workshop considers how we live our values and our faith in our immediate lives and in the larger world. Operating on the model of "the sacred within, among and beyond," we will explore our values, principles and beliefs and how they inform our interactions with the world. We will engage with the topics through some presentation of ideas, facilitated discussions and hands-on exercises.

### Session One

"Micro Faith"- What are our personal values, promises, and beliefs? How to we build our relationship with the sacred within? How do we live our values in our personal choices, and immediate relationships?

### Session Two

"Macro Faith"- How do our personal values apply to larger world? How do we live our values in the wider community? What does the "Moral Arc of the Universe" mean to you?

**When:** Wednesday Evenings – March 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> - 6:30-8:00 p.m.

**Who:** Facilitator Michelle Yates, Director of Lifespan Faith Formation  
Sponsored by First Universalist Church of Rochester

**Where:** 1st Universalist Church; Clara Barton Lounge  
150 S. Clinton Ave., Rochester, NY 14604

**Cost:** No charge; free to all members of the community  
Sign-up or reserve your spot by March 6, 2015

**Contact:** RSVP by calling (585) 546-2826 or email [edu@uuroc.org](mailto:edu@uuroc.org) ❖



# Sanctuary Village

Submitted by Carole Hoffman  
Social Justice Council of 1st Universalist

Sanctuary Village, under the auspices of the House of Mercy, became a refuge for those who have become marginalized, living under the Susan B. Anthony Bridge in frigid Rochester NY. It came to fruition when the city, as directed by the mayor, tore up the only place they could call 'home'. It was called 'Tent City', as tents had become their homes. With the destruction of these 'homes', came publicity and outpouring of donations of money and goods to help find a solution. Through Sister Grace's House of Mercy, combined with the generosity of the Buckingham Properties (ie. Glazer Family), a home, albeit temporary, was established. Immediately, this warehouse, with no running water, became 'home' for fifty people.

This is society's outcasts, many with mental disorders, chemical dependency, and some simply with no financial resources to put a roof over their heads. A social worker from the House of Mercy became the director of this facility...a monumental task. Volunteers have been on hand to offer rides to places where a breakfast is served; where hot showers are available; where assistance with filling out forms for public services is offered...and where the evening meal has been prepared and brought in. Mounds of clothing and supplies have arrived~~and the need continues, as the present residents get relocated to a setting more appropriate to their illness/needs, and more come in to fill the vacancy. There is a constant turnover. Sanctuary Village continually is seeking volunteers and specific items. If interested in being involved or donating goods or money, in a grass roots effort to help our brothers and sisters, call 585-328-6857 or go to [sanctuaryvillage@frontier.com](mailto:sanctuaryvillage@frontier.com).

We are also seeking people to be on the Homeless Task Force. If interested, please contact me via email. ❖

# News and notes from your Finance Team

Submitted by Ann Rhody

- Our annual Service Auction on February 1 raised over \$5000 to support our church's programs! Thanks to all who planned, volunteered, attended, donated, and bid. Special thanks go to chief auction coordinator Paula Marchese. A great time was had by all. Well done, everyone!
- In spite of high heat bills during this brutal winter, the church is still operating "in the black" a little over halfway through the fiscal year. The generous support of members and friends is always a big part of our success, so thank you whether you can give a little or a lot- it ALL makes a difference!
- The finance team is beginning to develop the 2015-16 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@yahoo.com](mailto:annrhody@yahoo.com)) as soon as possible. The annual budget will be developed throughout the spring, and voted on by church members at our annual meeting in June.

## Stewardship Campaign 2015

*Let Your Voice be Heard!*

Our annual stewardship campaign will hold wonderful surprises! Musical co-chairs Glenda Brayman and Howard Spindler will encourage you to "Let YOUR Voice Be Heard" in our commitment to sustain and strengthen our church and its mission. Stewardship Sunday is April 19, and there will be a special "Money 101" stewardship information session on March 29 after coffee hour. More details will be coming soon, so prepare to add your voice to the chorus of support and celebration! ❖

## District Assembly, 2015 Registration now open.

Theme this year is 'Broad Wings Deep Roots' and will be held in Niagara Falls **March 27-28**. If you are interested in being a delegate from First Universalist please contact Tom Williams. ❖



# RAIHN\*: Dates



Submitted by Marti Eggers

## Next Host Week at First Universalist – April 5<sup>th</sup>– April 12<sup>th</sup>

Celebrate Spring with your gift of time to families temporarily in need of a home. We will have 80 volunteer slots to fill, so please try to set aside some time for RAIHN in April!

## New! Second Level Volunteer Training for seasoned volunteers –

Wednesday, March 25, 2015, 6:30 - 8:00 pm  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 25 Westminster Rd. at East Avenue, Rochester.

Have you volunteered for RAIHN and attended our Volunteer Orientation? Would you like to learn more about issues our families are facing that shape their experiences, such as culture, trauma and poverty? Then please attend this interactive discussion with other volunteers as we increase our understanding about our guests' lives and share our own RAIHN stories and experiences. Please RSVP at 506-9050 or [coordinator@rainh.org](mailto:coordinator@rainh.org).

## Next First Level Volunteer Training Session

- Thursday, April 16th, 6:30 pm – Christ Episcopal Church, 141 East Ave., Rochester.

Volunteers are expected to attend a two-hour training session before or soon after volunteering for the first time. Training sessions orient volunteers to the RAIN philosophy and the expectations of guests and volunteers. There is ample time for questions as well. Seasoned volunteers are also welcome and provide valuable input based on their personal experiences.

\*RAIHN, the Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network, is a consortium of 14 faith communities that host families in temporary need of housing, and 31 faith communities that provide volunteers and other support to the host congregations. First Universalist is a host congregation, supported by St. Mary's, Aldersgate United Methodist Church of Greece and the Church of Love Faith Center. Four times a year, for a week each time, volunteers from these congregations work together to provide a welcoming, safe place for the families to come home to after a day at the RAIHN Center where they get help looking for housing and, for some, new employment. We prepare and serve a hot evening meal, help with homework, offer a lap, a story and a hug, a listening ear, a word of encouragement, overnight presence, breakfast and whatever else might be needed before the families return to their jobs or to the Center for another day of hard work. ❖

# Communications Committee



## Love Reaches Out Update

By now you may know that the Communications Committee has been involved in a *Love Reaches Out* (LRO) beta-test project sponsored by the UUA to help us develop a brand and communicate that brand in our outreach to the community. We've held three LRO workshops, the latest on January 24, 2015 which was attended by 18 people including Board of Trustee members, congregation members, friends and staff.

One of our goals in this workshop was to develop our core brand – a portable phrase or catchphrase to announce who we are, what we do and why it matters. Several activities focusing on the times we were our Best Self led to a final brainstorming session that resulted in many options, including our current phrase, "Nurture the Spirit, Serve the Community."

The winning phrase with was "an inclusive faith community, living our values, making a difference." Participants unanimously decided this phrase fit our current mission and vision statements as is.

Our Board of Trustees discussed the implications of this phrase at their February meeting. They felt the catch phrase was a good addition to our current mission statement of "Nurture the Spirit, Serve the Community", although not necessarily a replacement for it.

The board and the Communication Committee want to be sure that the congregation has time to consider this new phrase and to talk about it. We welcome all comments and questions. ❖



## Book Club Selection for March

Submitted by Shirley Bond

Our book selection for the month of March is *The Road From Coorain* by Jill Ker Conway.

In a clear writing style Jill tells of her childhood on a remote farm in Australia and her Mom's struggle to keep it. Hope to see you there. March 29th, 12 noon in the Adult Lounge, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. ❖

# Auld Lang Syne

Submitted by Karen Dau, archivist



CARL J. WESTMAN, the 12th settled minister of this congregation, was born on October 4, 1911 in Boston. When he was two years old his Unitarian parents moved to the Boston suburb of Everett and began attending a Universalist church there. When he was thirteen his father died in an accident and his minister took a fatherly interest in the bereft teen, so much so that he determined to become a clergyman himself. Because he graduated from high school in 1929 at the beginning of the Great Depression, he had to work to support his family. It was not until 1944 that he was able to attend college and theological school, working his way through while attending to his studies. He was ordained in 1950 and served pastorates in Gloucester, Massachusetts; Bridgeport, Connecticut; and Akron, Ohio before coming to Rochester in November of 1960. While in Akron he had been appointed to serve on the commission charged to create a merger of the Universalist and Unitarian denominations, which saw its work come to fruition in May of 1961, after he had become minister here. Dr. Westman was a strong social justice advocate and while serving in Rochester he attended the famous civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama with some 40 other local residents, taking a chartered bus with them to Montgomery. Also he attended the gathering in Washington, D. C. where Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his epic “I Have a Dream” speech. In July of 1963, when Rochester was an early site of the kind of rioting that would convulse this country during the rest of

the decade, he took part in the effort sponsored by the local clergy association to have pairs of clergy, one black and one white, walk together through rioting neighborhoods and attempt to restore calm.

During his time here he saw the beginning of the end of Maundy Thursday services, noting in April of 1961 that “we have, perhaps, outlived the time when there will be a representative response to this communion service.” He also oversaw major changes to the church building, especially the construction of a Religious Education wing in the space formerly occupied by a gymnasium, but also in Feb. 1965, the removal of three pews from each side of the rear sanctuary, and in August of the same year, the installation of a partition between the former minister’s study and what is now the Clara Barton lounge to create a new office area. He and his family lived in the last parsonage owned by the church, the board deciding after his departure to establish a housing allowance for future ministers instead.

Dr. Westman left Rochester in September 1965 to accept a pastorate in Plainfield, New Jersey, going from there to Lakeland and Port Charlotte, Florida. He retired from the ministry in 1976 and lived the rest of his life in Florida, having resolved “never to touch a snow shovel again.” He died on October 14, 2004 in Sarasota. He and his wife were the parents of two sons and two daughters. ❖

*The Selma Awakening, In Between and Black Pioneers in a White Denomination, and another former minister, George Tyger’s War Zone Faith.*

We’ve got Paul Rasor’s *Reclaiming Prophetic Faith*, which is the UUA “good read” for the 2014-2015 church year.

Those books are on the book table. Alongside we’ve got a freestanding shelf of donated books, most priced at 50 cents and some as low as 25 cents. We have a free magazine exchange. And we have a lending library, open to all members and to friends who’ve been coming long enough to get a permanent name tag. ❖

## Brush Up on Your Unitarian Universalism

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

These cold winter nights might be a good time to brush up on your Unitarian Universalism. Our church bookstore, which is open in the Clara Barton lounge during coffee hour, has a good selection of books of UU interest at a discount price.

We’ve got *The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide, Universalism 101, Our Chosen Faith* and other books on the basics of liberal religion.

We’ve got Richard Gilbert’s latest, *Growing Up Absorbed: Religious Education Among the Unitarian Universalists*; our former minister, and Mark Morrison Reed’s

# Drop-In Discussion, March Schedule

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

Drop-in discussions are held each Sunday at 9:15 a.m. (except in July and August) in the adult lounge 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.

### March 1 | *Roots*

Shirley Bond will review *The Family*, by David Laskin, which tells the story of the descendants of a Torah scribe and his wife who lived 150 years ago on the western fringe of the Russian Empire. Some went to America, some to Israel and some stayed put, and this determined their fates. Shirley will ask us to reflect on our own family origins and roots.

### March 8 | *UU Prophetic Witness*

Phil Ebersole will review and facilitate a discussion of *Reclaiming Prophetic Witness: Liberal Religion in the Public Square* by Paul Rasor, which is the UUA’s recommended “common read” for 2014-2015. (repeat of February 15 discussion)

### March 15 | *Selma Revisited*

Dick Gilbert will report on his trip to Selma as part of the 50th anniversary celebration of the voting rights campaign there. He attended the memorial service for UU minister James Reeb at which Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke.

### March 22 | *To be announced.*

### March 29 | *The Devil You Say!*

Why do we lie so frequently?. Is it part of being human? It is argued that in any 15 minute conversation with another individual there will be at least three lies. Bill Elwell will examine the history of lying that began in the Garden of Eden, based on the book, *The Devil Wins: A History of Lying*.

If you have a topic you’d like discussed or, better still, would like to do a presentation or lead a discussion, speak to Phil Ebersole. ❖



# House News

March 2015

Submitted by Tom Ruganis

Winter continues to be fairly quiet (Thankfully!) for the House Committee. The following are the highlights.

- Snow has been a concern for everyone and your patience is appreciated.
- Fortunately the heat seems to be working a bit better. Thanks to John Morgan for bleeding the air out of the radiators and agreeing to do so every couple of weeks.
- An unpleasant odor has been emanating from the old coal room in the basement. A thorough investigation was conducted with no obvious sources identified. Hopefully this will dissipate over time.
- General building aesthetics was discussed at the House committee meeting in February and we all agreed that more could be done to make the building more attractive. Marcy Klein and Sarah Singal agreed to be on a subcommittee to review and generate ideas. Many of the recommendations may be able to be addressed at the next clean-up day.
- The noisy exhaust fans in the two main restrooms were cleaned and are now much quieter. Thanks John Morgan.
- A tentative date for the spring cleanup has been set for Saturday May 30<sup>th</sup>. Please let the house committee know of any cleaning or small repairs that you think should be addressed.
- Two new projects have been added to our list regarding railings. One is for outside at the Clinton/ Court entrance and the other is a second railing for the stairs to the boiler/train room level. ❖

## The LUUnch BUUnch March 2015!

### Arnett Cafe

332 Arnett Boulevard, Rochester  
12:30 on Sunday, March 22.

“Warm welcome, Southern food.” D&C July 2014

*Food Folks*