



# Our Outlook

## First Universalist Church of Rochester

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## Sunday Services | December 2023

### December 3 | *Sabbath Practice, Sabbath Rest*

As Rev. Lane-Mairead returns from sabbatical, they will share some reflections on the importance of rest. Where can we all embrace a sabbath practice? And exploration of the Unitarian Universalist call to lay oneself down and take a nap.

— Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell

### December 10 | *Taking the World by Calm: An Advent Meditation*

The expression “taking the world by storm” is an apt description of life in our time. Wars abound, politicians clash, families argue, souls are troubled. How about doing a little editing right now, and wonder what it would be like to “take the world by calm.”

— Rev. Dr. Richard S. Gilbert

### December 17 | *In the Holy Dark*

The days have grown darker, the light has grown less—what lessons does the dark have for us? Let us explore the divinity in the dark, the holy depth in what we cannot see nor fathom, and the theological call to be curious about what truth can be found in the absence of light. A service in story and song that will be connected to the Earth and our seasons.

— Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell

### December 24 | *The Work of Christmas*

Gather as the old stories are told, as the songs are sung, as the candles are lit, all to celebrate the miraculous birth of Jesus of Nazareth, a child who would one day bring the liberation of all people. Bringing together stories from many different religious traditions, let us remember the work of Christmas as a liberatory story that calls us towards justice, care, and freedom.

— Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell — *This service begins at 7pm*

### December 31 | *TBA!*

TBA

— TBA

❖ **Services begin at 10:30am** ❖

Worship will be online and in-person at First Universalist Church. Check our website for more updated info! Please join us – Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/131764422>; Phone number: 1-646-558-8656 with Meeting ID: 131 764 422. ❖



## Rest is Resistance

*A Message from  
Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell*

Have you heard of Tricia Hersey’s work, *The Nap Ministry*? She is the Nap Bishop, a woman who is seminary-trained and makes the theological argument for rest grounded in Black Liberation Theology and the lineage of maroons, enslaved Africans who found ways to hide to avoid enslavement. Her work continues to call us towards rest as a space for dreaming, as a way to divest from the capitalist machine that wants to use our bodies and our minds towards making money, and as a space for justice. Out of this call, we are not resting in order to be able to get back to work, to feel rested and refreshed for more work. No. She invites us to rest as our divine right, as people who are worthy of rest, who need rest to survive.

I read and re-read her book, *Rest is Resistance*, throughout my 5-month sabbatical. It was an important reminder to me that rest must be woven throughout our lives, not just at the appointed times when our jobs or our duties say it is time to rest. Her words helped me to remember that I rest not to come back to church and to get into a culture of overwork (you all have been incredibly supportive of this) but rather because I need to rest. We all need to rest. It is what restores us. It is space where we can dream and imagine. Our brains literally need rest in order to function, as fluids are released that wash the brain while we are sleeping, ensuring our brain health.

These can be restless times. I have heard from folks in our church and in my life about disrupted sleep patterns, ongoing anxieties, waking up in the middle of the night to find oneself thinking about so much. If you are having trouble resting, you are not alone. As First Universalist and our area Unitarian Universalist congregations continue to explore what Rest means to us, it is my hope we can find some respite together. Some ways towards rest as our divine right.

In Faith and Courage,  
Rev. Lane-Mairead ❖



## Nostalgia and Rest

*A Message from  
Rev. Michelle Yates*

When I was a kid, I remember the joy of watching the same movie again and again. Now because of streaming services, my children can watch the same shows again and again as well. Sometimes it drives me crazy, and sometimes, even listening from the kitchen I laugh along with the familiar jokes.

This time of year, even adults consider rewatching a holiday movie they’ve seen before. We remember watching it with different people over the years; we share it with the next generation. We do the same with books, music, or activities that fill us with nostalgia. For me it’s “It’s a Wonderful Life,” Christmas music by John Denver, and retelling the stories connected to ornaments and decorations.

Why do we do it? Here are some answers I found in an article by Mitali Shah titled “[Here’s why watching the same TV shows and movies over and over again is so comforting.](#)”

“New shows present unexpected twists and turns, while familiar shows give our brains a rest. Rewatching shows is a way of using nostalgia as a form of consolation. It makes us feel good when we reminisce and escape the present moment.

Familiar content is much less cognitively demanding. Rewatching our favorite childhood films, in particular, has been shown to help us feel calmer, relaxed, and even grounded during times of heightened anxiety or sadness. Multiple viewings of the same entertainment piece underline that there is order in the world and that it may produce a sense of safety and comfort on a primordial level.

People also tend to watch the same shows and movies because that negates the feeling of disappointment and dissatisfaction. When you’re tired, these familiar shows help you reenergize and restore the feeling of self-control. Especially when you’re anxious.”

If you find traditional ways of resting elusive, maybe this might give you some courage (or permission) to revisit a favorite album, book, walking path, photo album, movie, or show. Perhaps nostalgia is just the flavor of rest you are needing right now.

Yours in the Journey, Rev. Michelle ❖

## Staff Bonus Time!

*Submitted by Ann Rhody, Finance Chair*

The staff at First Universalist is as hardworking and dedicated as they come! One a year, church members and friends have the opportunity to show our appreciation in a special way: with a Holiday Bonus.

This year's staff bonus collection will take place during the service on Sunday, December 3. You are welcome to donate in the offering basket, online, or by sending a check to church. Please be sure your donation reaches us before December 12, to ensure that we can include your contribution in the bonuses before the December holidays! ❖



## Finance News: *The Service Auction is back!*

*Submitted by Ann Rhody, Finance Chair*

Two questions:

- Do you have a 2024 Calendar?
- Have you marked Sunday, February 4 as the date for the Service Auction?

After a few years of other formats, we are finally ready to return to our more traditional Service Auction—only BETTER! While remote participants will bid by proxy, as we've done in the past, our OWL camera will allow folks online to see and hear all that goes on in real time. Also new this year: raffles and door prizes!

If you are fairly new to First Universalist, we warmly invite and encourage you to participate in the Auction. If you've been around awhile, you already know that the Service Auction is a not-to-be-missed event!

So why do we call it the “SERVICE” Auction?

For this main fund-raising event of our church year, we focus on fellowship and fun, rather than selling objects. So the tradition has been for members

and friends to donate a “service”: a meal, event, or personal talent. While we do have a few objects in the auction each year, these services provide a chance for us to interact with one another and build community.

Please begin to think about what you may wish to donate this year. Theme dinners, custom-baked goods, and homemade jams and jellies are typically great sellers. Please note that the Service Auction is NOT the place for garage sale objects, getting rid of household clutter, or downsizing.

Donation forms will be available in early January, and much more information will be coming soon. If you have any questions or would like to help with the Auction (there are MANY roles for volunteers—and it's fun!), please email [finance@uuroc.org](mailto:finance@uuroc.org) and we will be happy to connect!

And finally, mark those 2024 calendars and plan to attend the Service Auction after the worship service on Sunday, February 4! ❖



## From the Caring Committee: *We Need You!*

*Submitted by Paula Marchese*

At least one or two of you. Our mission is to support the emergency needs of the congregation as we are able. For example, to provide rides for doctor visits, to make calls, to visit. In return we bond with our UU members and friends.

If this service committee appeals to you, contact [caring@uuroc.org](mailto:caring@uuroc.org). Thank you and have a safe and happy holiday season! ❖



# Drop-In Discussion

Submitted by Beth Ares

Drop-in discussions are held Tuesday evenings from 6:30-7:30pm via the church Zoom account, and in-person on the first Sunday of each month in the Chalice Room at 9:15am. Phil Ebersole is the contact about in-church drop-in discussions. Contact [DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org](mailto:DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org) for the link, or look on [uuroc.org](http://uuroc.org)! Sometimes discussions are based on books/articles, but you don't have to do any prep to participate. Just drop in!

## Sunday, December 3 | What Is Capitalism?

*\*In-Person\**

Many of us tend to blame capitalism for the ills of society, but just what do we mean by the word? Are there different kinds of capitalism? What are the alternatives to capitalism? Are there good things about capitalism? Phil Ebersole presents.

## December 5 | Rochester's Guaranteed Basic Income Program

What's happening and what we can learn from this cutting-edge program. Presented by Lydia Rodriguez, GBI Program Coordinator, Black Community Focus Fund.

## December 12 | What Is Hamas?

Hamas is a political movement whose goal is to unify the Holy Land under Arab rule according to Islamic law. How did it arise? How did it come to rule Gaza? What are its goals? Phil Ebersole will present some information and lead a discussion.

## December 19 | Am I Losing it? The 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's

Do you worry about the health of your brain? We will talk about Dementia, Alzheimer's and normal age-related changes, based on a publication of the Alzheimer's Association. Presented by Beth Ares.

## December 26 | Open Topic

A freeform discussion—an opportunity to share thoughts, concerns and expectations while enjoying one another's company.

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

# Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

Submitted by Bridget Watts



## From the Unitarian Universalist Association: Call for GA Program Proposals

Submitted by Paula Marchese

We are excited to invite program proposals for the 2024 Virtual General Assembly's on-demand library. We welcome submissions from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences, with a special emphasis on historically marginalized communities, people of color, and the voices of our youth.

Your proposed programs should offer enriching learning and skill-building experiences, all while aligning with our designated focus areas. Let's collaborate in creating an inclusive and impactful virtual experience for all. The program proposal deadline is Friday, January 12, 2024. Please submit ideas to [uua.org/ga/program/contribute](http://uua.org/ga/program/contribute). Join us in shaping the future of General Assembly! ❖

# Housing for All: Let's Advocate!

Submitted by Chris DeGolyer and Marti Eggers

One way to reduce homelessness is to advocate for changes in laws and budgets on the local, state, and federal level. We have been meeting with leaders of various organizations to find ways First Universalist can join them in advocating for change. We joined the REACH Advocacy group that Rev. Peter Peters started this fall. We meet twice a month by Zoom on Wednesdays at 4pm.



In general, we want housing to be seen and treated as a human right as stated in the UN Charter of Human Rights, Article 25. One goal is to become more informed about pending legislation so that we can contact the appropriate representatives about it. Another goal is to connect those experiencing homelessness with those who are unaware of this growing problem.

Some excellent speakers have presented topics during these meetings. For example, Dr. Russell Weaver, author of the report "No Shelter, No Safety"

([blogs.cornell.edu/nysevictions/no-shelter-no-safety/](https://blogs.cornell.edu/nysevictions/no-shelter-no-safety/)), made the case that eviction prevention is violence prevention. His maps (at [blogs.cornell.edu/nysevictions/](https://blogs.cornell.edu/nysevictions/)) show that the Rochester neighborhoods with the highest eviction rates also have the highest crime rates. While New York State legislators see crime, not housing, as the number one issue, Dr. Weaver explained that evictions can lead to crime. When housing has high turnover, people don't get to know their neighbors and look out for each other. Evicted people often resort to desperate acts, such as breaking into vehicles and buildings to get warm. Since many landlords have raised rents beyond the rate of wage increases, this year's evictions have increased over last year's; affecting 7.6% of renters in Monroe County.



We are looking for new members for the REACH Advocacy group. If you are interested, please ask one of us to add you to the mailing list. ✦

## Eastman at Washington Square Concerts

Concerts are held at our church at midday on Thursdays. Each concert begins at 12:15pm and ends at approximately 12:45pm. Admission is free!

- **Dec. 7 | Maple String Quartet**

Come to hear Brahms, String Quartet No. 2 performed by Eastman students Isabel Chen and Magali Pelletay, violins, John Crowley, viola, and Gabriel Hennebury, cello.

- **Dec. 14 | Holiday Jazz**

Bob Sneider and Eastman students, Kayla Sconiers and Ben Sneider will present a program of seasonal jazz classics. ✦



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CHOSEN  
FAMILY is

REAL FAMILY.



# Church Tour: With the Genesee Valley Hiking Club

*Submitted by Donna Anderson and Connie Valk*

Michael Scott led a tour of First Universalist on November 4 for twenty members of the Genesee Valley Hiking Club. It was initiated by Hal Schuler, a history buff who loves to organize tours of downtown Rochester, he engaged our church's Membership Committee to participate in a tour of the Washington Square neighborhood.

The tour began in Washington Square at the monument of Abraham Lincoln, moved to First Universalist Church with a special organ presentation by Eastman School Music student Aaron Tan, then to St. Mary's Church, and lastly back to Washington Square at the cannon. ❖



# NYSCU: Binghamton!

Submitted by David Damico

The 198th Annual Meeting of the *New York State Convention of Universalists* (NYSCU) was held October 20–21, 2023, at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Binghamton, NY. The Rev. Verdis LeVar Robinson (known to many in our own church) spoke on “*The Audacity of Universalism*.”



Janus Mary and I were excited to attend NYSCU as we have other conventions in the recent past. Aside from the keynote, I often see friends whom I know from past meetings and love being in a new (to me) UU venue. In addition to being a delegate of First Universalist Church of Rochester, I was attending as editor of the *Universalist Herald*. My stated goal with the *Herald* is to show by written example how Unitarianism and Universalism complement one another. Even with each tradition having a different path, they now serve a common purpose. Our downtown UU church is proof of that.

The event kicked off Friday night with a meet-and-greet at the convention hotel in downtown Binghamton. The weather was very wet but that didn't dampen the spirits of the early attendees. I'd estimate there were 30 people from many different churches sharing light fare and chit chat.

The weather on Saturday morning was still wet but the church was warm and welcoming. Local church members were doing last minute setup as hosts. I met a number of church board members who were as excited as I was about the event. The church video person was recording the keynote which left me to my duties as delegate and editor.

Rev. Douglas Taylor, minister of Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Binghamton, opened the convention by welcoming all spiritual experiences to the event. The “Voices of the Spirit,” four-person quartet from First Universalist sang four pieces at

various times during the service. Members were Glenda Brayman, Ann Rhody, Howard Spindler, and Lew Ward-Baker, with Theo Munson on piano. All words were by Richard Gilbert—*We Bid You Welcome* (Wally Kleucker), *Be Gentle with One Another* (Betsy Jo Angebrandt), *Come Into the Circle of Caring* (Richard Wilder), *There is a Time* (Edward Schell III). Composers are listed in the parentheses.

The keynote was presented by our own Rev. Verdis LeVar Robinson, who spoke on “*The Audacity of Universalism*.” To say it was powerful doesn't do it justice. It was delivered with complete sincerity and ownership. Verdis paused around the middle of the talk because he was moved and asked to sing. He did, “*Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child*.” The crowd was moved by the music and the way Verdis shared himself with the crowd. To see this powerful talk, go to YouTube at <https://tinyurl.com/yeyrbn8a>.



There was a question and answer after, which was eagerly embraced by the audience.

The actual morning service and presentation was about 2-1/2 hours long.

The business meeting was after. As a delegate for our church, I, along along with five others, Howard Spindler, Richard Reed, Karen Dau, Michael Scott, and Rev. Richard Gilbert, listened to the planning side of NYSCU and voted. I gave a brief presentation at the end about the *Universalist Herald* and how it can be of use in communicating Universalist efforts and conferences from many different churches and locations.

Overall, the 2023 convention held in Binghamton was delightful. The trip was easy, local church members accommodating, and meals were delicious.

An announcement for the 199th meeting has not been announced but will be found on NYSCU.org when posted.

The 200th meeting—NYSCU's bicentennial—will be held in Canton, NY, in October of 2025. ❖



# Membership Committee

Submitted by Grant Fish

HAPPY DECEMBER! 2023 is about to end, and a new year is about to start. It is both a time of reflection and a time of anticipation. In preparation for helping with the active growth of the church, both in membership and visibility, we are reviewing and updating the New Member brochure from several years ago. We are looking forward to the hiring of a Membership Professional and working with a Church Growth Consultant. In preparation we are verifying that our recent attendance records have been consolidated and are available in a digital format.

The Membership Committee is committed to supporting our Church and its growth. The current committee members are: Donna Anderson, chair, Karen Lobracco, online ministry, Shirley Malone, Clinton Swingle, and Grant Fish.

We look forward to greeting all new people that attend either in-person or online. ❖



# EcoJustice

Submitted by Sarah Singal

What's up with EcoJustice?

As Unitarian Universalists we are aware that we are a part of the interdependent web of all existence. The newly formed EcoJustice Group is working to act out our commitment to protect our planet and promote sustainability, examining and improving our practices at church and at home, and connecting with larger efforts in our city, state, country and around the world. The group is open to members and friends of the congregation. It meets at noon on the first Sunday of each month in the Chalice Room. For

questions, contact [ecojustice@uuroc.org](mailto:ecojustice@uuroc.org).

Protecting planet Earth is a huge project!. What does that include? How do you break it down? We can borrow some basic organization from groups that have already thought this through. One such group is Transition Streets, a program for neighbors to come together and change their behavior to protect the environment. It breaks the program down in five categories: waste, water, transportation, food and energy. This movement started in the United Kingdom in 2009, and a detailed workbook leads participants through the program. You can find more information and download the first workbook chapter online at [transitionstreets.org.uk](http://transitionstreets.org.uk).

The UUA's Green Sanctuary is another basis for organization. It differs from Transition Streets, focusing on congregations rather than neighborhoods, and emphasizing social justice, connecting sustainability with anti-racism and anti-poverty. There are four focus areas: Environmental Justice, Worship and Celebration, Religious Education, and Sustainable Living. For more information go to [uua.org](http://uua.org)>social justice>environmental justice>green sanctuary program.

The EcoJustice Group has decided to start with something well defined: waste management, specifically the 3R's: reduce, reuse, recycle. Already we have learned that the 7 R's are even better. Although some words change, the idea is Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repair, Redesign, Reinforce, and Refuse. Sometimes Rethink is substituted. We have held a recycling table with hand-outs at coffee hour, and have posted the 7 R's on the bulletin board. A tour of eco park, Monroe County's warehouse recycling center, will have taken place in mid-November. We are examining how we are doing at church with recycling. We plan to contribute to *Our Outlook* and to *This Week*, show pertinent films, and we plan to celebrate Earth Day/Week?/Month?.

So far our meetings are filled with planning. Maybe later there will be time to reflect and share quietly, perhaps in a small group ministry setting. And surely, over the next four years, there will be occasions to join others publicly to promote sustainability and to protest practices that endanger the interdependent web of all existence. ❖



# EcoJustice News

Submitted by Sarah Singal

## Climate action pledge!

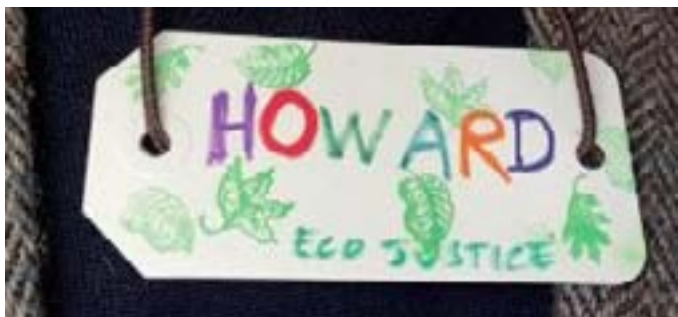
Step 1: Go to [Climategfl.org](http://Climategfl.org) home page; click on View the Strategy, then scroll down to Climate Action Pledge Individual and follow the prompts.

Step 2: Go to the EcoJustice News trifold in the Clara Barton Lounge; sign the poster.

As of November there are 9 signatures; surely there are more than 9 of us committed to climate action in our congregation. You don't have to spend all your waking moments with the movement. Start with just a few.

## Plastic Free Name Tags

The EcoJustice group has been searching for plastic-free name tags and has just come up with an easy and cost-effective option. Come to the EcoJustice table at coffee hour and see how to make your own.



## Here's what one congregation has been doing:

In October Howard attended the New York State Conference of Universalists (NYSCU) at the UU Church of Binghamton, NY. Here is a list of what they have done over the last 17 years.

- 2006 Sustainability task force established.
- 2007 Began process of adopting UUA Green Sanctuary program.

- 2008 Began UUCB Carbon Neutral Project.
  - a. Tracking energy use in each of several areas of the building. Careful data tracking.
  - b. Solar Panels installed. Careful data tracking.
  - c. Heat pumps investigated and eventually installed, both ASHP and GSHP (air and ground based).
  - d. NYSERDA energy audit was "pivotal," prompting decisions about heat pumps, solar panels, caulking, pipe insulation, enhanced insulation.
  - e. Building Envelope Model to assess heat loss, looking at interface of outdoors to indoors all over.
- 2010 Accreditation UUA Green Sanctuary.
- 2015 UUCB drafted their Commitment to Climate Action.

Come join us: we meet on the first Sunday of the month, at noon, in the Chalice Room. ✦





## Animal Ministry: *Abby and Brutus*

*Submitted by Lois Baum*

It was the summer of 1980. Brutus resided at Wild Winds in Naples NY. It was love at first sight. Whenever I came to visit, he'd rush to my side, rub against my legs, and make gurgley sounds. His feathers fluffed, his wattle grew, and the caruncles that covered his crown turned colors too. Clearly, this turkey had fallen for me! Maybe it was my speaking in a silly voice as I dared pet this rescued bird, but I was but a mere human, so what's with this romance!

That Thanksgiving, I ate my usual share of turkey, but that was my last. No doubt Brutus had broken through my human conditioning. I began to connect that someone like Brutus had their life taken from them, simply for a few moments of my palatal pleasure.

This year, our Animal Ministry group is sponsoring Abby, a turkey living her forever life at ASHA Farm Sanctuary in Newfane NY. Abby was hatched into animal agribusiness, and soon after was debeaked, routinely done to prevent the birds from pecking each other. This common procedure is excruciating, with no aesthetic, searing off a third of the beak which is as sensitive as your finger. Abby wound up in a typical crowded turkey farm, given no more room than the size of an iPad. She never met her mom, never felt grass under her feet, never felt the warmth of the sun. Within a couple of months, Abby became very ill. The turkey farm provided no veterinary care as profit is their priority. Doomed

to die, she was rescued by a caring individual who got her the care she so desperately needed. At five months, she made a full recovery and was placed in her forever home. Nine years later, Abby is now thriving at ASHA Sanctuary, eating grapes, enjoying the companionship of two ducks, and basking in the sun.

In our society, all of us are conditioned into a passive acceptance of eating dead animals without giving it a second thought. In 2001, Greg and I began to learn of the egregious violence inherent in this abusive industry. For birds, even cage-free, it all begins at the hatchery. Fifty percent of the chicks are male, thus having no value to animal agribusiness (for meat or eggs), and so the males are immediately killed upon hatching. This is what we each support until we embrace the vegan ethic. Through my purchases, it pains me to realize I used to pay someone else to kill the animals I ate and wore, like hiring a "hit man" ... as long as I'm not the killer, and not having to see that with my own eyes, I blindly accepted it without another thought. This is our common conditioning. Once I recognized I was choosing violence vs veganism, it all became crystal clear.

Animal agribusiness does not view these individuals as the sentient beings that they are. It is an abusive industry. Please choose not to support it. Peace begins on your plate. ❖



REMEMBER it's OKAY  
TO FEEL SAD ABOUT  
MISSING PEOPLE OR  
TRADITIONS YOU ONCE  
HAD.

*@ BlessTheMessy*

# HOLIDAY

## SELF-CARE PLAN

Self-care for my

**MIND**

Self-care for my

**body**

Self-care for my

**SPiRit**

Self-care for my

**HEART**

What is something that makes you happy?

What are you grateful for today?

[www.simplysprouteducate.com](http://www.simplysprouteducate.com)





# 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 10:30am on  
Sundays**

**Minister** | Rev. Lane-Maired Campbell

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

**Music Director** | Dr. Brock Tjosvold

**Office Manager** | Emma Barry

**Nursery Care Provider** | Carol Williams

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More info is available on our website: [uuroc.org](http://uuroc.org)

The usual deadline for all submissions to  
*Our Outlook* is the 15th of each month.