



Our Outlook

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First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY

January 2016

Sunday Services | January 2016

January 3 | *Fire Communion*

Join us the first Sunday in January for our annual Fire Communion Service. This service is a time of reflection about the year that has passed and a time of renewal for the new year we are entering.

- Tom Williams & Kitty Forbush & Patti Goodwin



January 10 | *Brushstroke Theology*

A sermon for the New Year.

- Celie Katovitch



January 17 | *Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday*

Today we will honor Dr. King's legacy in word and song, and reflect on how we might bring that legacy to bear on the present moment.

- Celie Katovitch



January 24 | *God*

Last year we unpacked the discipline of prayer from a UU perspective. This year continues the tradition-- newly dubbed "The Service of the Word"-- of devoting a service to grappling with a word our tradition has at times shied away from.

- Celie Katovitch



January 31 | *Rev. Sarah Gillespie, preaching*

Rev. Sarah, our Community Minister Affiliated, will be leading worship this Sunday. (Rev. Celie is in Ohio this morning, filling the pulpit at her ordaining congregation while their minister is on sabbatical.) Rev. Sarah serves as a chaplain resident at Strong Memorial Hospital. We welcome her to our pulpit!

- Rev. Sarah Gillespie

Regular service begins at 10:30am





Pastor's Perspective

Message from Rev. Celie Katovitch

In this month when we celebrate Dr. King's legacy, we will hear reflections on the Civil Rights Movement and the struggle for racial justice in our country in earlier decades. As important as it is to look to that history for guidance, it is equally vital to remember that the struggle for racial justice is a part of our present, not only our past. The Black Lives Matter movement was born as a response to present realities of injustice. So in hope that we may each find ways to engage the ongoing work of racial justice, I offer this excerpt from a recent pastoral letter by UUA President Peter Morales.

"Black Lives Matter is a cry of outrage in the face of the specter of the repeated killings of black people. And it is more than this. It is a cry of protest against the continued marginalization of millions of African Americans. The killings, horrific as they are, are the tip of the iceberg. The killings are the most visible and extreme examples of a society that allows racism to destroy the lives and aspirations of tens of millions. Beneath the anger are anguish and tragedy.

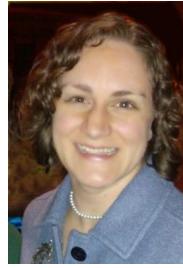
The protests and the banners and the window signs are the latest actions in our long tradition of struggling against racism in America. We have stood with African American leaders in the Moral Mondays movement. We were there in Selma fifty years ago and again this spring. The best of our forebears stood against slavery.

While the Black Lives Matter movement is part of a long tradition, it also presents new challenges. This is a decentralized grassroots movement with no single leader and no institutional foundation. There is no Martin Luther King, Jr., issuing a call to Selma. Today we are called to be present, to listen deeply, to follow, to bear witness, to practice humility. Today's Selma is everywhere...

Yes, we will disagree about tactics... [but] let's talk respectfully to one another. Let's listen deeply. Let's focus on our highest aspirations and our affection for one another. Let's hold one another tightly and hold our opinions loosely.

I have been inspired by what I have seen our people do. When we let love guide us, we will do the right thing."

In faith, --Celie ❖



Walking Together:

Director of Life Span Faith Development

Submitted by Michelle Yates, DRE

In a living tradition like Unitarian Universalism, there are many sources that influence our spirituality, theology and way of living into our faith. The "Six Sources" try to capture, as concisely as possible, these influences.

At our second *Cozy Supper* this year (Friday, January 15th 5:30-7:30pm), we will be considering the second source: **"Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love."**

Let's go with **"Prophecy"** or **"Prophetic Words and Deeds"** for our Faith Development Theme for January. Though there is a larger message that we in this moment in history are in need of hearing.

Consider the heroes who *challenge and inspire* you...

Remember that the role of prophet is not restricted to those vetted for the position, but to those who speak truth. Prophets can certainly be religious leaders, but also poets, family members, social justice advocates, artists, etc.

It bears note that the 2nd Source is the only place in our Principles or Sources that "evil" is directly mentioned. This is very important, for while our faith is not so naïve or optimistic to pretend there is no such thing as evil, we rarely speak directly to it. I think this is because like the word "god", "evil" can be a complex word used heavily in other religious traditions with various meanings and references.

I have many times been asked, "What do UUs believe about evil?" or "How do UUs answer the problem of evil?" Here is my answer: Capacity for evil is a potential we all have. It is tragically part of our struggle and existence as human beings. We live our faith by working to live into our best selves, and by *"confronting powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love."*



What prophetic words and deeds challenge and inspire you in this work?

-This month the Book Group is reading *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander. We will meet to the book discuss on Sun, Jan 31st @ 12noon

- “When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, ‘Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.’”
— Fred Rogers

- “We cannot understand the moral Universe. The arc is a long one, and our eyes reach but a little way; we cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; but we can divine it by conscience, and we surely know that it bends toward justice.” --Theodore Parker, Unitarian Minister & Transcendentalist, 1871

- “I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do.” —Helen Keller

“Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And when you look long into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you.”
--Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*. ❖

Adult Religious Education

UU History

Meets the following Thursdays from 1:30–3:30pm

Note: Dates have changed.

January 21st - Part 4

Universalism: Murray to Ballou

March 3rd - Part 5

Evolution: Beyond Christianity

April 7th - Part 6 (potentially)

The Road to Merger and the First 50 Years

We will be watching one of the six hour-long videos produced by Ron Cordes for the series *Long Strange Trip: 2000 years of UU History*, followed by facilitated discussion.

Feel free to come to one or all sessions as you can. Please RSVP so we can plan for enough space and seating to Michelle Yates at edu@uuroc.org or 585-310-2484.

Childcare available if requested a week in advance. ❖

Social Justice Committee

Submitted by Shirley Bond

The Social Justice Committee is ecstatic to announce that the Plate Collection for November designated for GRCC was \$364!

The Greater Rochester Community of Churches is concerned with the idea that we can work together to make the City of Rochester a more wonderful place to live. Becky Elwell works closely with this group.

We are proud to be members of this congregation and we thank-you for your generosity.

Shirley Bond, Becky Elwell, Sarah Singal.
Social Justice Plate Committee ❖

Membership

Submitted by Nancy Gaede

When people make the decision to formally join our congregation, we ask them to tell us what drew them to become members. The following, printed with permission, was written by Franky and Suzie Gutierrez.

“We never felt like strangers, even on that very first day. At this church we’ve found a place our family belongs, a place where we can share not only one another’s joys and sorrows, but also share in calls to action for social justice or calls to think deeply about what it means to be human or just calls to delicious treats at 11:30. Even Milo feels like this is a place he can be himself and expect to be greeted by so many people who care about him each week. We want him and Anya and any other Gutierrez babies to grow up as part of this community where they can learn about love, service and fellowship. First Universalist has become a regular part of our new lives here in Rochester, and now, 15 months later, we can’t imagine our lives here without it.”

Membership is always possible at First Universalist Church. If you have decided that you have found a spiritual home here and wish to become a member, contact Reverend Celie to make arrangements. We will hold a Path to Membership class on Saturday, April 9, for anyone considering membership. We also invite anyone who has joined this church year to join us. We will recognize all those who have become members during this church year on April 10. ❖

From The Finance Team To Our Wonderful Congregation:

Thank you...

Submitted by Ann Rhody for the Finance Team

- For your generous contributions for staff bonuses! The Board was able to distribute a meaningful bonus to each of our employees, who were greatly appreciative.
- For your support of our fall **Change Drive** and Holiday Shoppe. The Holiday Shoppe raised well over \$1000 this year. Thank you to Katherine Flynn and Marcia Weaver, Shoppe keepers and to all the bakers and folks to who donated goodies to the Shoppe. Both events raised funds that will help our church's mission!

Next up... the Annual Service Auction! February 7, 2016

It's our biggest fundraiser of the year, and arguably the most fun! Members and friends donate services or goods... perhaps a dinner, outing, or specialty item, and the bidding begins! It's a user-friendly event which takes place after the worship service and lunch in the lounge. How to get started? Think about what YOU can donate and place up for bid in the auction. Donation forms are available at church or via e-mail (pmarchese@rochester.rr.com) OR donate online at uuroc.org. Donations must be received by Wednesday, January 27 in order to be in the auction booklet. AND be sure to plan to attend the auction on February 7. *Don't miss out on the fun!* ❖

Holiday Bonuses for Staff Appreciated

Submitted by the Board

Thank you for your generous contributions for the church staff holiday bonuses. Our staff does much to support the mission and operation of the church. The bonuses were distributed and gratefully received in time for the holidays. ❖

Meditation Visioning Meeting

Interested in having a standing time for meditation here at church? Join Rev. Celie and members of the compassion meditation group for a conversation about possibilities on Wednesday, January 6th, at 3:45 PM in the volunteer office. We'll brainstorm about options for times and days, format, and how such a space could help fulfill the mission of our church. All are welcome. ❖

A RAIHN Family, 3 Years Later...



I'm not sure if you would remember my family. My husband and I and our two very young daughters were in the RAIHN program from August to December 2012. You were a light at one of the darkest chapters of my family's life. Your kindness and encouragement have stayed with us to this day. My husband and I both often think about our time in the program.

We were able to maintain a residence and I had a decent job while we remained in Rochester. In May of this year we moved back home to Arizona, and I was able to secure a great job in the same field that I worked in while in Rochester. Both of our daughters are in school now, and since all of our family is either here in Arizona or in California, they get to see their grandmother, aunts and uncles regularly. My husband is still at home, but we are looking at getting him a part-time job when our youngest daughter begins 1st grade next year. He still has problems with pain due to his injuries, but I think the drier climate has helped.

I just wanted to touch base with you and extend our heartfelt thanks for your kindness. I hope my email finds you well, and I am happy to see that the program is still doing such good work. ❖

Communications Committee Update

Spreading the word about First Universalist.

ROC the Day

On December 1, First Universalist participated in ROC the Day, a 24-hour event that allows people in our area to make online donations to local not-for-profits through United Way of Greater Rochester. For those who are not already pledging, this is great way to support our National Historic Landmark, the Eastman at Washington Square concerts held in our sanctuary and our social justice programs.

The Communications Committee publicized our ROC the Day involvement through posters, our website, Facebook page, our Clinton Ave outdoor sign, and our Order of Service. Announcements were also made at the Eastman at Washington Square concerts, from our pulpit, and through Twitter.

Advertising

We placed advertisements in the “Rochester Worship” section of City Newspaper, inviting the public to our Music Sunday on December 13 and to our Christmas Eve Service. These ads appeared in both the print and online versions of the newspaper. As of the writing of this article, Music Sunday attendance was well over the usual Sunday attendance, and we know that some guests came because they saw the ad.

We have also been working on a few projects to facilitate both internal and external communication.

Web site redesign

The committee is redesigning the website to energize its appearance, streamline it and better communicate our church’s essence to our congregation and to the community. Though the rework is in its preliminary stages, the Committee is excited to see the changes take shape. We hope for a grand unveiling some time in 2016.

Leadership communications email list

In December we began using a simple system for church leadership communications. Anyone who wishes to alert leadership about activities, scheduling changes, and other items of interest, can email or call the church office and Melissa will email the message out to the leadership. We hope this will improve communications among church leaders, who can then spread the word to their committees as needed. Stay tuned! ❖

Cozy Night Supper

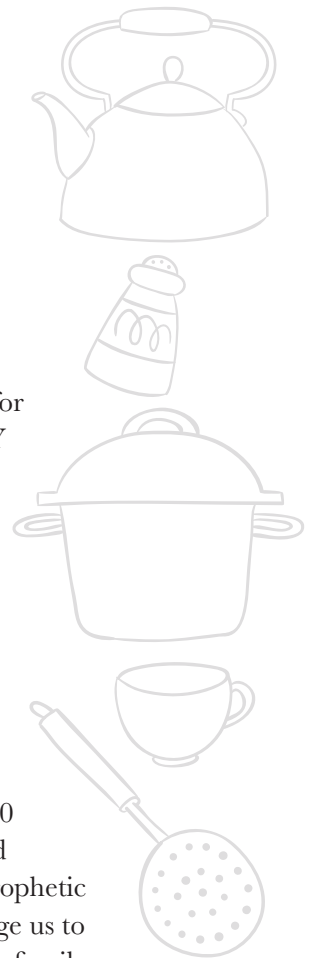
Submitted by Kathy Russell

Words and Deeds of Prophetic Women and Men - January 15th

“Words and Deeds of Prophetic Women and Men” is the focus for our Friday, January 15th COZY NIGHT SUPPER. This program, from 5:30 to 7:30, continues our exploration of the Unitarian Universalist sources. Held in the Clara Barton Lounge, a simple supper, including a vegan option, will be provided along with wonderful camaraderie - hopefully including you! At 6:30 we will then focus on the second source, “Words and deeds of prophetic men and women which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion and the transforming power of love.”

Let us know of your ability to attend by signing up on the Membership Table or by contacting Kathy Russell at krussel6@frontiernet.net. Your RSVP/sign up will allow us to prepare appropriately. Child-friendly activities exploring this source will be arranged if you make a request one week in advance.

And for those who like to plan ahead... Future Cozy Friday Night Supper Dates exploring other sources are February 26th and March 18th. ❖



Living Our Values, Making A Difference

Submitted by Newcomb Losh, Communications Committee

On Music Sunday, our Music Director **Carol Xiong** led our choir to inspire us with seasonal songs from around the world



Music Sunday – Dec. 13, 2015



Rick Bartell (center), Planned Parenthood's Regional Director of Education and Outreach for Central and Western NY tells the Drop-In Discussion that our religion's O.W.L. (Our Whole Lives) sexuality program for teens is great. We learned of several ways we can volunteer to keep health care accessible for the 34,000 men and women who depend on Planned Parenthood in central and western NY for healthcare.

Our own **Lois and Greg Baum** created raffle gift baskets and staffed the raffle ticket sales table at REACH's Dec. 3rd fundraiser for its the newly-opened temporary shelter for our region's chronically homeless people. Several of our members and friends created gift baskets for, volunteered at or attended this event at Harro East Ballroom.



Brush Up on Your UUism

Submitted by Phil Ebersole, Library

If you want to learn or refresh your knowledge about the basics of our liberal religious faith, you might want to check out these books which are for sale and available for borrowing in our church bookstore and library.

- *The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide* by Peter Morales is one of the most complete introductions to Unitarian Universalism, covering ministry, worship, religious education, social justice and ministry. An earlier version of this guide is available at a discounted price.

- *A Chosen Faith: an Introduction to Unitarian Universalism* by Forrest Church and John A. Buehrens is a thought-provoking sourcebook on liberal religion for searchers, newcomers and lifelong learners.

- *Welcome: a Unitarian Universalist Primer* introduces UU prayers and readings including the Seven Principles and Six Sources, chalice lighting and more.

- *Universalism 101: God Is Love* by Richard Trudeau describes what is distinctive about the Universalist part of our Unitarian Universalist heritage.

You might be interested in these books by a former minister of our church.

- *In Between: Memoir of an Affirmative Action Baby* by Mark Morrison-Reed is the frank personal account of growing up black in the era of the civil rights movement, and deals with racism, the death of Martin Luther King Jr., black radicalism and the experiences of an inter-racial family.

- *The Selma Awakening: How the Civil Rights Movement Tested and Changed Unitarian Universalism* by Mark Morrison-Reed.

And in this...

Growing Up Absorbed: Religious Education Among the Unitarian Universalists by the Rev. Richard S. Gilbert is about the experience of lifelong religious learning from infancy to old age.

The books may be bought on our new book table, where books are sold at cost, or checked out for four weeks from our lending library, open to members and to friends who have attended long enough to have name tags. ✦

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.losch@yahoo.com.

Bookstore Clearance Sale, January 10

The First Universalist church bookstore sells donated used books for 50 cents and 25 cents each. Every so often we reduce the price of the 50-cent books to 25 cents and clear out the 25-cent books. But this year we'll hold a last-chance clearance sale of the older 25-cent books before we find a new home for them.

The library and bookstore are open in the Clara Barton lounge during coffee hour for browsing, borrowing and buying. ✦

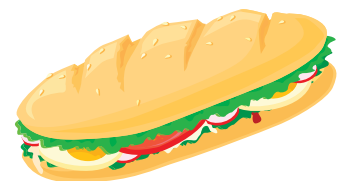
The
LUUnch
BUUnch
Jan. 2016

12:30
January 24.

Suggestions on restaurants?
Contact Joyce Gilbert at JTGilbert@frontiernet.net.

Corner Bakery

1367 Mt Hope Ave.
UofR College Town



Auld Lang Syne

Submitted by Karen Dau, archivist



AS NOTED in my previous column, some of the earliest knowledge about Universalism in Rochester comes from “Records of the First Universalist Sabbath of the City of Rochester, Monroe Co.,” located in the church archive.

A sad entry from July 1840 is “An Address to the Sabbath School...” by Miss Lucy D. Stacy, who was possibly in her early teens when she dictated a farewell to her father. “I have in all human probability met you for the last time,” she told her class, “but I humbly trust that I shall be reconciled to my lot be it life or death[.] [M]y sincere wish and ardent prayer to our Heavenly Father is that you may ever prosper in your Sunday school, and never be led astray from the paths of virtue, truth & holiness pointed out to you by your beloved Superintendent and teachers...Tis hard for me to be confined[.] And on my bed of sickness lie[.] Come my dear Jesus come[.] You are my friend though I should die.” Her Address was entered after her passing, and she is buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery, newly opened only two years before.

Throughout this volume there is reference to “the usual recitations,” but to the disappointment of this present-day UU they are never described. There appears to be a great deal of Bible study, oral reciting and sermons used in the classrooms. In 1841 the Superintendent mentions his plan to introduce “The Sabbath School Manual” by Rev. Wm. S. Balch the following year. On December 23, 1842 the church “was beautifully trimmed with evergreens.” Rev. Nathaniel Stacy, a pioneer preacher of Universalism in Western New York, was in town to preach on July 22, 1843, and on September 24 the “discourses” [sermons] were thought to be dry and the congregation sleepy. But the following Sunday the sleepers were wide awake for preaching by the redoubtable Father Hosea Ballou of Boston, considered one of the founders of Universalism in America.

The record does not allude to the sad demise of the congregation some time around late March, 1844. On April 7, 1844 is an entry noting that the “Scotch” Presbyterian congregation, which had purchased the church they had unsuccessfully tried to keep, had given them permission to hold classes there. But on May 12 the secretary reported that “Three Sabbaths hath [sic] passed since we last met.” Apparently they failed to gain admission to their former

church because of an “inadvertence” on the part of the sexton, who it seems to this writer had deliberately locked them out. These were hard times for local Universalism, and only the Sabbath School was keeping the movement alive in an indifferent city.

This record also fails to mention the incorporation of the congregation on April 13, 1846, and until May 5, 1850 there are little more than attendance statistics recorded. Nor surprisingly does it note the dedication of their newly constructed church on December 16, 1847, although on December 12 it says “no place to meet.” The last page, dated April 30, 1852 gives a year-end statistical record including the item that the “average audience at S. S.” was 108. By this time the hardest days of the Universalist faithful were behind them.

(Part 2 of 2) ❖



News

Submitted by Keith Stott

Religious Resolutions

Are you hoping that your New Year’s resolutions are consistent with our UU Principles and Purposes? One of our library books, *A Sand County Almanac*, by Aldo Leopold deals with the ending of each of these: respecting “the interdependent web of all existence” and “living in harmony with the rhythms of nature.”

The first chapter, “January Thaw,” offers good advice for our first month. “Thoughts of spring are no substitute for caution” (page 5). You will find good guidance and agricultural entertainment as you follow the author’s adventures with plants and animals through the year on his Wisconsin farm. Harvest this! **Call no. is 500.9 L**

p.s. “How could a weed be a book?” (page 50) ❖

Drop-In Discussion Schedule, Jan. 2016

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

Drop-in discussions are held each Sunday at 9:15 a.m. (except during the summer) 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.

January 3 | *Escalating Inequality*

The Unitarian Universalist Association has chosen *Escalating Inequality* as a Congregational Study-Action Issue for 2014-2018. Phil Ebersole will present some facts about this issue and lead a discussion.

January 10 | *Just Mercy*

The Unitarian Universalist recommended Common Read for 2015-2016 is *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama, a legal practice dedicated to defending the poor, the unrepresented and the wrongly condemned. Phil Ebersole will review and lead a discussion.

January 17 | *Active Listening*

The message heard is not always the message sent. Janet Rothbeind will introduce Active Listening, a technique for improving communication by requiring listeners to paraphrase what they hear and check with the original speakers as to whether they've understood correctly.

January 24 | *Teenage Pregnancy*

Rick Bartell, regional director of education and outreach for Planned Parenthood of Central and Western New York, will lead a discussion of teenage pregnancy and Planned Parenthood's successful In Control program.

January 31 | *Generational Behaviors*

This discussion will focus on recognizing behavioral traits of the Mature, Baby Boomer, Generation X and Millennial generations. Many social and civic groups have experienced a downsizing of membership which Dr. Bill Wittich, in his book *Celebrate Differences*, attributes to misunderstanding of communication methods between these generations. The behavioral and attitudinal differences will astound you. David Damico will facilitate.

If you have a topic you'd like discussed or, better still, would be willing to lead a discussion, speak to Phil Ebersole. ❖

House News, Jan. 2016

Submitted by Tom Ruganis

Happy New Year! The big news this for this edition concerns the water pipe coming into the church. A noise was heard at the water meter over the summer and had slowly been getting louder. On December third, the Rochester Water Department determined that there was a leak between the street shutoff and the water meter. Because of the location it was determined to be the church's responsibility. And we were given until Jan 3rd get it repaired. With the holidays approaching and RAIHN week starting on Jan 3rd the decision was made to move ahead and get it repaired as quickly as possible. The work has just been completed as of this writing. No significant problems were encountered and water now flows into the building instead of in and around. Thanks to Benedict Plumbing for their continued excellent work for the building.

Other highlights of building related activities.

- Michael Scott has joined the Building Committee. His knowledge and expertise will be an invaluable asset to the committee.
- Sample LED bulbs have been installed in the sanctuary and the appearance is very close to the older bulbs. Michael Scott is heading up the project to replace all of the incandescent bulbs in the Clara Barton lounge as well as the sanctuary. He is also working on the possibility of getting assistance from RG&E to pay part of the cost. Thank you Michael.
- The project to update the signs within the church is being restarted. The original vendor has not been as responsive as we would like and a new vendor will be found.
- Several pews have been discovered to be loose. These will be addressed by the church's carpenter.

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, or join the House Committee, please let anyone on the committee know. The Committee is currently: Tom Ruganis, Chair (tom@ruganis.net), Sarah Singal, Mary Vyverberg, Karen Dau, Marcy Klein, Mike VanArsdale, Michael Scott and Ed Deller. We would love to hear from you! ❖

FINI

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 | Michelle Yates

Music Director | Carol Xiong

Sexton | Brandon Fagan

Nursery Care Provider | Carol Williams

Office Administrator | Melissa Davies

Office hours, Monday – Friday, 9:30–2:30. Telephone 585.546.2826

Board Of Trustees 2015–2016

Ed Deller (President), Nancy Gaede (Vice-president), Karen Ruganis (Clerk), Michael VanArsdale, Janet Rothbeind, Kitty Forbush, Tim Mullins, Rev. Celie Katovitch (ex-officio)

Editor, *This Week at First Universalist* (digital): Melissa Davies; Monthly newsletter *Our Outlook*, David Damico. Church photo on cover by Tom Ruganis.

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