



Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

Minister

The Rev. Lane Campbell
minister@uuroc.org
(585) 325-5092

Director of Life Span Faith Development

The Rev. Michelle Yates
edu@uuroc.org
(585) 310-2484

Director of Music

Brock Tjosvold
music@uuroc.org

Office Administrator

Emma Barry
office@uuroc.org



**First Universalist
Church of Rochester**

150 South Clinton Avenue
Rochester, NY 14604
585-546-2826
uuroc.org

Sunday Services | May 2020

May 3 | *Active Hope for Trying Times*

In trying times as these, keeping the faith can help sustain us. But what does “keeping the faith” look like when we all believe different things? This week Erin Scott will lead us in an exploration of the word “faith,” and how our Unitarian Universalist faith can help us to meet calamity with serenity.

— Erin Scott

May 10 | *The Joy and the Challenge of Faith*

To place our faith in something or someone can be such a big relief! On this Mother’s Day Sunday, let’s explore the challenges and the rewards of trusting in something or someone outside of ourselves, especially in light of relationships with those who care for us.

— Rev. Lane Campbell

May 17 | *Respecting Indigenous History and Land*

The Common Read across the Unitarian Universalist Association for this year is *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz. How does the history of indigenous peoples in our country inform ways to be in relationship and solidarity today?

— Rev. Lane Campbell

May 24 | *Memorializing the Dead, Remembering the Dream*

There will be no parades this year in NYS. Fewer veteran graves will be marked with flags. Without the outward rituals, let’s take a moment to reflect on what Memorial Day might mean to Universalist theological liberals, who crave truth-telling and justice, and yearn to work for and believe in a vision of “the American Dream.”

— Rev. Michelle Yates

May 31 | *Moving at the Speed of Trust*

Author and activist adrienne maree brown writes about moving at the speed of trust in her work around group process. What does this mean to us at First Universalist Church?

— Rev. Lane Campbell

✦ Services begin at 10:30 am ✦

*Worship will be meeting online into the foreseeable future. Please join us—
Internet link: <https://zoom.us/j/131764422>; Phone number: 646 558 8656
with Meeting ID: Meeting ID: 131 764 422. ✦*

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Faith as an Act of Trust and Confidence

Message from Rev. Lane Campbell

It seems like a strange time to write about our monthly theme of “Faith.” I’m hearing so many ways this word is used to justify everything being okay in the midst of this pandemic we are facing. Folks saying things like, “Keep the faith.” Or people saying faith-related things like, “Trust in God. It’s all according to His (or Her or Their) plan.” I feel like these phrases can be used to tell us, “It’s all going to be okay,” “Not too much is going to change,” “If you’re feeling bad about this, you’re not faithful enough.” It’s moments like these that I am so grateful I am a Unitarian Universalist and I hope that you are too.

An act of faith in this moment can mean trusting our feelings and honoring them. An act of faith can mean choosing to trust those in our lives to remain safe and follow the social distancing guidelines that have been laid out for us. The definition of the word “faith” from the Oxford Dictionary is, “Complete trust or confidence in someone or something.” It may be that we trust in the future vision of getting through this while also acknowledging that living through a pandemic is hard. Or perhaps an act of faith also looks like making masks for farm-workers in our rural communities because we have deep confidence in their labor and our interconnectedness.

There are so many ways the word “faith” has been used to be dismissive of others or to ask us to put aside what we are feeling for that trust and confidence in someone or something. I say, let us hold our faith alongside our conscience. Let us hold our faith alongside reason and science (main pillars of Unitarian Universalism and many other religious traditions). Let us take this month ahead to really interrogate and question what exactly we are willing to place our trust and confidence in. I am excited to be on this faithful journey with all of you.

With love,
Rev. Lane ❖



Stages and Touchstones of Faith

*Message from Rev. Michelle Yates,
Director of Life Span Faith Dev.*

Faith can be such a tricky word. What is it? How do you get it, keep it, and develop it, especially in this era where church has left the building? What do people and families need for faith development at different stages?

As I ponder Fowler’s “Stages of Faith Development” from infancy to adolescence, I am reminded of the ways my children and I are revisiting these touchstones in these times of stress to feel grounded. Perhaps you may notice yourself revisiting these building blocks of faith as well.

Our youngest selves need to know that we are loved and cared for, so connecting with the people we know best, and feeling supported in caring for ourselves and our families is the foundation of faith. Very Universalist!

Our preschool/young elementary selves need *rituals and rhythms* that teach us what we DO as a faith community. For UUs this might include lighting a chalice, and simple ways to pray, meditate, or express gratitude throughout the day. These nurture our sense of religious identity and belonging. How do you find ways to incorporate your faith into your daily life?

Our elementary selves need to know the *stories* of our people, stories that inspire wonder and teach our values. We grow by asking wonderful and challenging spiritual *questions*. After this we search for *identity and belonging* in the activities and events of our faith community. How are you doing this, or struggling with this, in a time when we cannot meet in person?

Our adolescent selves look to faith as a life-organizing tool from which to synthesize *values and balance* complexities. We ask, “How should we live?” “What is the right thing?” We look for opportunities to live our faith and engage in social action, which is a challenge in this time of social distancing. We consider the meaning of religious rituals and symbols and try to figure out their meaning for us. We learn how faith can be a sustaining force in times of sadness and fear.

As you can see these are touchstones of faith development that we revisit again and again throughout our lives.

Continued on page 3

Stewardship News

Submitted by Richard Reed

FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ROCHESTER

STEWARDSHIP



Support Our Vision

Once again, many thanks to everyone who has pledged so far! To those who haven't yet pledged, we sincerely ask you to do so as soon as possible. It's critical, especially during these times, to support our church, so we can continue to offer the programs and visions that are so important to our church family and our outreach!

As of April 15, 2020, we have received 91 pledges for \$198,525, which includes eight new pledges. Our current year pledges are 107 for \$213,482. However, there are still 24 outstanding pledges for \$25,110. So you can see that we still have a ways to go.

Please do your part and pledge if you have not yet pledged! Pledge online or mail your pledge card to our church. Any questions should be directed to Kathi Milch, Jim Milch or Richard Reed. Our contact info can be found in the church directory. Thank you. ❖

AND • NOW • ABIDE TH • FAITH
HOPE • LOVE • THESE • THREE • BUT
THE • GREATEST • OF • THESE • IS • LOVE

Walking Together, *Continued from page 2*

In this month of exploring Faith, I encourage to you to check in with your faith development needs. Ask for and give love and caring. Find rituals and rhythms that give you comfort. Look for and share stories of your family and your spiritual values. Identify ways you still act out your faith, and live it with others. Ask questions. Find meaning.

May it be so.

Yours in Faith,

Rev. Michelle ❖

Finance Challenges... and Blessings

Submitted by Ann Rhody, Finance Committee Chair

During these turbulent times, many of us have encountered unprecedented challenges, as well as profound gratitude. The world of church finance is no exception! This month's episode:

ONLINE GIVING!

The Challenge:

The Finance Team had been exploring electronic giving and had hoped to have it up and running by the end of the fiscal year (June 30), but having online services forced us to roll it out far sooner. How do we do it? How do we get the information online donations to our Collector, Bill Jones? How do we let people know about it?

The Gratitude:

We are now up and running with online giving, thanks to Office Administrator Emma Barry and Treasurer Dick Shroyer as well as others who weighed in during the effort.

Members and friends can give plate offerings, pledge payments, and any other type of donation through our website, uuroc.org (scroll to the bottom of the page, and look for the little yellow "donate" area on the left). Although you'll need to establish a PayPal account, you can still use your own credit card to donate.

One suggestion: if you make a pledge payment online, please email Collector Bill Jones to let him know the payment and the amount. This will help to ensure that your payment is credited properly, as we work out systems of communication regarding online giving.

And just a reminder: technology is wonderful, but you can always go "old school" and mail a check to the church—we are still checking mail and making bank deposits!

Thanks for supporting the church, through thick and thin! ❖



Harvesting Justice Circle News

Submitted by Connie Valk, Harvesting Justice Circle

Our Harvesting Justice Circle is working with First Unitarian's Immigration Committee to produce masks for farm workers in Western New York. The organization Refugees Helping Refugees, who have been making masks for those in the health care field and selling some to the general public, is now sewing masks for the hundreds of farm workers who are toiling in the fields and orchards to place food on our tables.

As of publication, one of our members donated a stash of fabric, and two others are busily adding to the refugees' efforts by using their sewing talents. Bits & Pieces, a craft store in Fairport, has donated sewing supplies. Another of our members has sent funds to Rural & Migrant Ministry (RMM), the organization that is distributing the masks. Yet another of our members transports the finished masks to an RMM staff person in Geneva, NY, from where the masks are being distributed.

Our Faith in Action Council, along with First Unitarian and the Religious Society of Friends, is donating funding to give the refugees stipends for their efforts.

As you can imagine, this mobilization is the result of scores of emails, texts, and phone calls. We are proud of helping to coordinate the collaborations that met this need. This is truly faith in action. ❖

House News

Submitted by Ed Deller

While the major building-related projects are on hold due to the coronavirus, some church members have been keeping a watchful eye on the church each week. Thank you to Karen Dau, Ruthlee Barton and Tom Ruganis for getting the mail and doing a general check of the church building during this time of virtual church life. Special thanks to Karen for tackling the expired contents of the refrigerator!

In March we had a leaking steam pipe that caused wet areas in the train room and our boiler room. Our plumber responded quickly and replaced a section of piping.

A plan for dealing with the normal spring cleanup tasks will be developed when the physical distancing directive is lifted. ❖



Social Justice Plate

Submitted by Shirley Bond, Social Justice Plate Committee

Our plate offering for the month of May will be for Rochester Community Bikes. They are a grassroots organization staffed entirely by volunteers. They repair and collect used bikes, free of charge to the Rochester area's most needy children and adults. Some clients depend on bicycles as their main source of transportation for getting to and from work. They also distribute adult tricycles to disabled individuals who would not normally be able to ride. Please think of the Rochesterians who would benefit from our generosity when the plate is passed. This church community continues to amaze us and we thank you. Social Justice Plate Committee: Shirley Bond, Becky Elwell, and Marcia Weaver. ❖

Eunice Eckberg Memorial Film Series

We regret that the scheduled film for April 19 had to be cancelled. *Wilderness Journey* is important—it will be re-scheduled for review in the fall.

Melissa Parrish, our discussion leader, suggested that we watch the four-episode series of *When They See Us* on our own, and meet via Zoom to share thoughts and reactions on May 16 from 10:30 am to noon. She and Rev. Lane are facilitating this conversation.

When They See Us is a 2019 miniseries created, co-written, and directed by Ava DuVernay for Netflix. It premiered in four parts on May 31, 2019. It is based on events of the 1989 Central Park jogger case and explores the lives and families of five male suspects who were falsely accused and then prosecuted on charges related to rape and assault of a woman in Central Park, New York City. Please RSVP to FIRE@uuroc.org. ❖

Living Our Values, Making a Difference

Submitted by Connie Valk

Dinner for REACH Guests

One by one, church members dropped off entrée, veggies, cole slaw, baked beans, bread, and desserts to the REACH shelter on West Main Street on April 8. In these Covid-19 days, First Universalists dropped off the food in the parking lot instead of directly serving food to guests.

Thanks go to volunteers Bill Elwell, Katherine Flynn, Joyce and Dick Gilbert, Monica Tyne, Connie Valk, Dave VanArsdale, Tom Williams, and Carole Hoffman, who organizes these dinners for 35 people each month. ❖



Carole Hoffman and Katherine Flynn deliver food to a REACH staff member.

Plastic: “Easily Shaped or Molded”

Submitted by Kate Fleury for the EcoJustice Committee

It's true, we want to have convenient, lightweight containers for food and commodities. We want the security of having food and medications sealed until we remove the seals. We want bright colors in our clothes and pretty paints for our homes. We want lighter weight yet sturdy cars. We like all the advantages of having plastics in our lives. But today plastics are mostly made from petroleum.

Petroleum replaced whale oil as a fuel and whale-bones in corsets. Petroleum fuels parts of our electrical grid and the pumps that send clean water to our homes. Petroleum helped replace horses and sailing ships as transportation. But now our use of petroleum is being held accountable for warming the planet. Discarded plastics enter the food chain and they gather in our bodies.

NPR Frontline reported in March 31, 2020, that the oil and gas companies knew many decades ago that recycling plastics would be “costly, difficult, and infeasible.” To avoid bans on use of plastics, they promoted the idea of recycling plastics to soothe/lull consumers into freely accepting generous use of plastics for everything. It has turned out to be true that recycling is difficult. It has become so overwhelming that China stopped accepting collected plastic waste. In our own area, the amount of plastic to be recycled has gotten so large that new restrictions have further limited the plastics we can include in our recycling.

What can we do? Of course, on an individual basis, we can refuse plastic clamshells and we can use recyclable straws. On a larger scale, we need to continue to push for the sustainable manufacture of plastic substitutes. Another part of the solution will be to find ways to truly recycle the plastic already present in our environment. There are small projects, like the “FlipFlopi,” a boat in Kenya made out of flip flop sandals and other plastic ocean refuse. A 12-seater punt was built in Dumfries, Scotland, out of “plaswood”—it goes up and down the Thames River publicizing the plastics problem. Clothing, rugs, purses, furniture, surfboards, games and many other items can be made of recycled plastics. An enzyme found in landfills/compost is being developed by Carbio, supported by L'Oreal and Nestle, to see if it can “digest” plastic from water bottles so it could easily be reprocessed. Novozyme would then bring the process to large scale.

So far, the oil and gas companies have had it pretty much their way. They have supplied needs for us, while gaining profits for themselves. Dialectic change, of the type needed to affect the big picture of saving the planet, is usually driven by grass roots demand. Making small individual changes will not be enough. Will we be “plastic” enough, that is, can we change enough, to support all the big efforts needed to reduce our use of petroleum-based plastics? Can we “easily shape and mold” ourselves to save our own lives? ❖



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 10:30 am Sundays

Minister | Rev. Lane Campbell

Director of Life Span Faith Development |
Rev. Michelle Yates

Music Director | Brock Tjosvold

Office Administrator | Emma Barry

Office hours: Tue.–Fri. 9 am–4 pm; closed Monday.

Nursery Care Provider |

Carol Williams & Sundae Hodge

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Emma Barry

Editor, monthly newsletter *Our Outlook*: Emma Barry
(usually), Marcy Klein (*this month*)

More info is available on our website: uuuoc.org.

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