

Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY

October 2016

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Our Outlook

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Sunday Services | October 2016

October 2 | *The Final Form of Love*

“Which is forgiveness.”

- Celie Katovitch



October 9 | *The Art of Letting Go*

As autumn progresses, the leaves are beginning to let go. If only we could do this as easily as they.

- Celie Katovitch



October 16 | *Bread Sunday*

Join us for this annual ritual of community and nourishment.

- Celie Katovitch



October 23 - *The Mystic's Guide to Social Change*

“Prophetic witness” reconsidered.

- Celie Katovitch



October 30 | *Interfaith Dialogue*

Dr. Muhammad Shafiq, Professor of Religious Studies, is the Executive Director of the Hickey Center for Interfaith Studies and Dialogue at Nazareth College. The Hickey Center encourages strategies for living peacefully in a religiously diverse world. Dr. Sharif has written and taught widely on the topic of interfaith dialogue.

- Muhammad Shafiq, guest speaker

Services begin at 10:30am.





Pastor's Perspective

Message from Rev. Celie Katovitch

Dear Friends,

Many of you have mentioned struggling with a mix of feelings this election year. There is a sense that in this pivotal time-- with polarization, demonization of "the other," and sometimes even violence, on full display-- it is vital for us to engage. At the same time, many of us worry to some degree about getting caught up in the rhetoric ourselves. We wish for ways to engage from a place of UU values, but also in a way that does not enflame divisions or paint those who disagree with us all with the same brush. Parents and grandparents may have an added concern about what kiddos are taking in, and about how to field their questions and help them make sense of things. (As a starting point, I recommend to you this article from UU World, from years past but still relevant: (www.uuworld.org/articles/finding-middle-ground)).

Navigating an election season with spiritual groundedness is a daunting task. I encourage you to listen to the voices of conscience and of those who are wise souls in your

life, as you think about how you will do this. I offer here a few practices I have found helpful in my own life, in case they may be of help to you also.

Set limits on your media exposure.

Maintain a spiritual practice: some daily routine that connects you with gratitude, with the larger rhythms of life, and with your ties to all people in the human family. Call yourself back to the sacred spark that shines within each. Do this especially when it seems difficult, even impossible; sit with that difficulty, while cultivating gentleness toward others and yourself.

Speak (and write, and post to Facebook) with humor -- humor that heals, rather than humor that lampoons or tears down.

Embody the beloved community. Do this very literally: stay active, to keep healthy in body as well as in spirit, and use your hands to bring something good into the world here and now -- whether this is by cleaning up your neighborhood, visiting a friend who is sick, creating art, or serving dinner to our RAIHN folks.

Yours in "the love that overcomes all differences, that heals all wounds, that puts to flight all fears, and reconciles all who are separated."

--Celie ❖

New York State Convention of Universalists 190th Annual Meeting

The 2016 Annual Meeting of the New York State Convention of Universalists (NYSCU) will be held October 21-22 at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Utica, NY and the Unitarian Church of Barneveld, NY. Keynote speaker, **Phil Arnold** (right) is Associate Professor of Religion and Native American Studies at Syracuse University and Director of the Skā noñh—Great Law of Peace Center.

If you have yet to attend one of these meetings, it is an exciting time to get together with spiritual, inquisitive, and like-minded UUs!

This year we are allowed an increase to 5 delegates, so if you are interested, please talk to **Shirley Bond**, a member of the Board or a member of the Nominating Committee for further information.



Of course, either members or friends from our church community can attend. I envision a fall foliage road trip for some.

Lots of fun, laughter and some serious denominational work will be included. All Unitarian Universalists are invited to attend.

Registration information can be found at nyscu.org (scan code on right).





Walking Together:

Director of Life Span Faith Development

Submitted by Michelle Yates, DRE

Perhaps you've gone through the "elevator speech era", and considered your personal "come to UU" story, but whether you are new to Unitarian Universalism or born-and-raised it can sometimes be a struggle to explain our creedless faith.

Our Affirmation of Faith, which we recite weekly in service, offers some insight, that is, if you understand the UU meaning of the words we use. As an exploration of what we aspire to as people of faith, we will draw our Children's Worship and monthly Faith Development Themes from the affirmation, one line each month throughout this church year.

- Oct- **Love** is the doctrine of this church;
- Nov- The quest for **Truth** is its sacrament,
- Dec- And service is its **Prayer**.
- Jan- To dwell together in **Peace**
- Feb- To seek knowledge in **Freedom**;
- March- To serve humanity in **Fellowship**;
- April- To the end that all **Souls** shall grow into harmony
- May- With the **source and meaning of life**;
- June- Thus do we **Covenant** with each other and with All.

Being October....According to Dictionary.com, "doctrine," a noun, is defined as a particular principle, position, or policy taught or advocated. Thus **Love** is the principle, the position and the policy which we teach and for which we advocate.

It is said, "love is a decision you make, not a feeling you have." Martin Luther King Jr.'s teachings remind that we don't have to like someone, but we are called to love them. This view of Love is very counter cultural. The world around us often implies that love is something we have no control over or responsibility for. To choose to act with loving-kindness is making a commitment; to the future of a relationship; to the future of our world.

"The love is real. It sustains us and holds us, no matter what—in life and beyond. This is safety. This is truth. This is the foundation of faith. When we love, truly love, we are as filled with and as close to the deep and sustaining mystery of life as we may ever be. We are as safe and as strong as we may ever be. When we love, we dwell in a sweet and holy place."

-Jeanne Harrison Nieuwejaar ❖

Remember the Church: Planned Giving

Submitted by Dave VanArsdale for the Finance Committee

Want a simple way to remember our beloved First Universalist Church? Consider a beneficiary designation for a Retirement Plan, IRA, or insurance policy. No lawyer is needed and you can change it at any time. For example "[?]% [my spouse], [?]% First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY". Many plans also provide for a contingent beneficiary in case the person you designate passes before you.

Another way of making a bequest to the Church is through your will. This generally does require a lawyer or a do-it-yourself web site. Typical wording might be: "I give [?] % of my net estate to First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY." Percentages work better than fixed dollar amounts. Bequests have played an important role in the lasting financial stability of the church. You can help to ensure a "legacy of love" for future generations by including First Universalist in your plans.

Treasurer Dick Shroyer can provide you with the Church's tax identification number and any help you might need. It would be helpful to tell the Minister of your planned giving.

"The meaning of life is to find your gift The purpose of life is to give it away" Pablo Picasso ❖

Social Justice Plate Offering

Submitted by Shirley Bond

The committee is pleased to announce that the total collected for the Social Justice Plate offering for the month of September was \$276. I am sure that RAIHN is very appreciative as they are a fine local organization.

Our offering for the month of October is the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. Our plate committee is especially proud of the work the UUSC does concerning disaster aid. They help the needy by answering directly to the affected community with little fanfare or photo opportunities. They also are concentrating this year on environmental justice. By doing this work they advance the rights of people who might otherwise be left behind. Thank-you so much for your basket donation. ❖

Adult Faith Development Offerings

Sacred Conversations on Race will not be taking place this month as previously advertised. Please stay tuned for when we are able to reschedule this program.

Race to Justice: Building the World We Dream About-

Are you compelled by the racial justice conversation? Not sure where to start? We've heard you!

Which is why our year-long Faith Development program, "Race to Justice," explores how the story of race in our personal lives, our culture, and our national history intersects with personal, institutional and community stories of our faith.

This transformative education course invites groups of approximately 10 people who will meet throughout the church year to explore the deep issues related to racial justice and practice together the anti-racist, anti-oppressive habits and skills of living into multicultural Beloved Community.

Through exercises and discussion, this group will engage topics of personal awareness, white privilege, systemic racism/oppression, and what we CAN do about it.

We have had a great response for this program so far, and want to be able to keep the groups small so we have added another group.

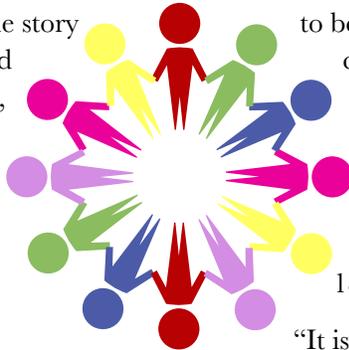
The first three sessions will be bi-weekly, after which the frequency of meeting will be determined by the group.

Please look at the groups and dates below. Note that the dates have changed slightly for the Thursday group from what was previously advertised.

Please let our facilitators, Rev. Michelle Yates and Suzie Gutierrez at office@uuroc.org, know if you would need to be in the Tuesday or Thursday group, or you could do either. This will help us to keep the groups balanced.

Thursday Group- 6:30-8:30pm on Oct 13th, Oct 27th, and Nov 10th.

Tuesday Group- 6:30-8:30pm on Oct 18th, Nov 1st, and Nov 15th.



"It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult." Seneca

"Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced." James Baldwin ❖



Beginning Meditation

Submitted by Kathy Russell



The fall session of Beginning Meditation began on September 21st and will continue through November 16th. This is held on consecutive Wednesdays from 5:30–6:30pm in the rear of the sanctuary. No experience is necessary and you need not be a member to attend. For more information contact Kathy Russell krussel6@frontiernet.net or Moritz Wagner moritz.wagner.swiss@gmail.com. You may also join us any Wednesday. Doors will be open and waiting for you from 5:15 to 5:30. ❖

Where Are They Now?

Submitted by Marti Eggers



Part 3 – “I never thought...

“I never thought it could happen to me, that I’d need help like that,” said “Rose,” one of the RAIHN* graduates who spoke at a spring meeting of RAIHN coordinators. She had just started at SUNY Brockport when the bottom fell out of her life and she came into the RAIHN program with her children. She was in and out of RAIHN in three weeks and is now well on her way to finishing a degree in Mental Health Counseling. She just needed a place to land while she pulled her affairs back together again. RAIHN was able to give her that safe space and time. And she reminded us that hard times can happen to any family; none of us is immune to trouble.

What is the picture of family homelessness in Rochester? In the past year the RAIHN director had to turn away approximately 300 families. Some of them were couch surfing, some were sleeping in cars or trucks, and some were in the Cadillac Hotel, which is worse than sleeping in a car. This is right here, right now, right down the street from us and in the suburbs as well. We need to think about it.

We can and do make a difference – one parent, one child, one family at a time. How? By becoming a RAIHN volunteer. The next training session for volunteers will be held on Tuesday, October 25th at 6:30 pm at Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 4115 Dewey Ave., Rochester. The next Host Week at First Universalist begins on October 9th. If you would like to learn more before volunteering, ask Chris DeGolyer, chrisdeg@frontiernet.net, Marti Eggers, mceggers@gmail.com, or Sarah Singal, ssingal@rochester.rr.com about RAIHN and about “shadowing” experienced volunteers during this host week. You can make a difference.

***RAIHN** – The Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network is a consortium of faith communities that provide safe shelter and meals to families who are temporarily homeless, for a week at a time, three or four times a year. ❖

Roc/ACTS Banquet

Submitted by Shirley Bond

Roc/ACTS banquet is being held November 17th from 6-8pm at Our Lady of Americas, 864 East Main Street .

First Universalist is a member of this organization. Shared information by various churches helps us combat various ‘issues’ in Rochester. Their web site gives a more detailed explanation of their work. Since Becky Elwell and I are on their board we would be happy to give you more information.

Consider buying a ticket for this banquet and let’s get a few tables together. Only \$25... see you there.

Becky... elwellbecky@gmail.com
Shirley... Bondshirl1@gmail.com ❖

From the Garden Committee

Submitted by Sarah Singal

Downsizing? Do you have some attractive but unwanted large planters at least 18” across? The garden committee is looking for several to use for cherry tomatoes next season. Our flower beds are overrun by these happy growers who are crowding out just about everything else. Please see Sarah Singal or Shirley Bond or Connie Valk if you can help out.

Also, October and November are good months for planting milkweed seeds outdoors. We will be handing out seeds at church as they become mature. Find us at coffee hour! ❖



Living Our Values, Making A Difference

Submitted by Newcomb Losh, Communications Committee

Photographer: Ed Deller



Jim Scott's "Pete Seeger and Me" interactive family concert in our sanctuary on August 26 celebrated the music and banter from his days of performing with Pete. The audience joined in singing many songs, including *The Rainforest Song*. Thank you **Joyce Gilbert** for organizing this concert!



Elizabeth Osta (far left) makes a point about a social justice issue as **Carol Vyverberg** (2nd from left), **Marie Sidoti** and **Bill Elwell** listen.

Living our values means periodically re-evaluating them. On Sept. 11, **Eric Van Dusen**, a member of our Social Justice Task Force led one of the focus groups in listing and prioritizing community issues and identifying allies. L to r: **Jim Eckberg, Eunice Eckberg, Pam Jacobstein, Eric Van Dusen, and Kate Fleury.**



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.losh@yahoo.com.

House News- October 2016

Submitted by Tom Ruganis

Alas, vacation season is over. The positive side of that is we will have more time to work on the many projects around the church! Some of these projects include painting the church and volunteer offices, painting the RE stairwell, and developing recommendations for improvements to the Clara Barton Lounge not to mention the Fall Clean-up Day scheduled for Oct 22nd. Of course this is in addition to the myriad of activities needed for the day to day upkeep of the church.

The only activity to report for September were a few plumbing repairs including the replacement of the toilet in church basement.

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

All photographs by
Newcomb Losh
unless otherwise noted.

Drop-In Discussion Schedule, Oct. 2016

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

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

October 2 | *UU Terminology*

Unitarian Universalists use terms in our services similar to those used in other churches, but with different meanings—such as “doctrine,” “sacrament” and “prayer” in our affirmation of faith. Robert Remley will lead a discussion of how UUs define certain religious terms. Please feel free to bring up terms you think need to be discussed.

October 9 | *Corruption of Our Democracy*

Phil Ebersole will lead a discussion on corporate influence on American politics, which is a UU Study-Action issue for 2016-2010

October 16 | *The Third Reconstruction*

Phil Ebersole will review and lead a discussion of *The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics and the Rise of a New Justice Movement* by the Rev. William J. Barber II. This is the UUA's recommended Common Read for 2016-2017.

October 23 | *Basic Income Guarantee*

When more and more workers can't find jobs because of offshoring and automation, how can society function? Hank Stone will lead a discussion of the Basic Income Guarantee, in which every citizen is paid enough money to live.

October 30 | *Understanding Poverty*

Kate Fleury will review and discuss *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* by Ruby K. Payne. She writes about survival tactics of generationally poor people and how this differs from survival tactics of the middle class and the wealthy.

November 6 | *Election 2016*

We'll discuss the national election, who will win and who should win. Phil Ebersole will lead the discussion.

November 13 | *ROC/Acts*

We'll learn about the interfaith Rochester Alliance of Communities Transforming Society and issues they try to address.

If you wish to have a topic discussed or, better still, are willing to lead a discussion, speak to Phil Ebersole. ❖

Book Club News



Submitted by Shirley Bond

October's book selection is called *All the Light We Cannot See*, by Anthony Doerr. A stunningly ambitious book about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II.

This book was suggested by Ruth Fitzgerald and is very popular. Reserve your copy soon.

The October Book Club meets on October 30th, upstairs in the Chalice Room on the second floor at 12 noon. All are welcome and it is not necessary to have read the book. Hope to see you there.

Any questions happily answered by

Shirley Bond at Bondshirl1@gmail.com or
Sarah Singal at ssingal@Rochester.rr.com ❖



News

A Christian Nation?

Are we really “One Nation Under God?” Does that explain – or excuse – some Americans’ belief that God ordained the conquest, or even obliteration, of Native Americans because they were descended from the Canaanites? That God ordered their fate, according to the bible? Beware! It is too dangerous to associate Christianity with *any political beliefs*. So proclaims Gregory A. Boyd in his thought-provoking book *The Myth of A Christian Nation: How the Quest for Political Power is Destroying the Church*.

A great read this election year. **Call number is 322 B.** ❖

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 | Stacey Yang

Sexton | Brandon Fagan

Nursery Care Provider | Carol Williams

Office Administrator | Melissa Davies

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

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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>.