



Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

September 2014

Minister

Celie Katovitch
minister@uuroc.org

Director of Music

Bryan Holten
music@uuroc.org

Minister of

Religious Education

Michelle Yates
dre@uuroc.org

Office Administrator

Kris White
585.546.2826
office@uuroc.org

Our Outlook

Newsletter Editor

David Damico
uurocnews@gmail.com

First Universalist Church

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

Visit us online www.uuroc.org

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Sunday Services | September 2014

September 7 | Ingathering Sunday. *Lost and Found*

Join us in a joyful service as we welcome one another home from summer journeys far, near, and within; celebrate the beginning of the regular church year; and give thanks for the blessings of religious community.

-Celie Katovitch



September 14 | *Stuck in the Elevator*

In a spiritual-but-not-religious age, what's religion good for, anyway?

-Celie Katovitch



September 21 | *Freight and Freedom*

We are approaching the period known as the "Days of Awe" in the Jewish tradition. We will explore the insights of this holy time: a time of both heaviness and lightness of spirit.

-Celie Katovitch



September 28 | A Parable for Today

Sister Barbara Moore, RSM, Associate Faculty, Professor of Preaching and Practical Theology, Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, and Director of the Program for Study of Women and Gender in Church and Society. Sister Moore is also the 2014 recipient of the Greater Rochester Council of Churches *Faith in Action Network Metropolitan Award*.



Worship service begins at 10:30am Sundays.





Pastor's Ponderings

Message from Minister, Celie Katovitch

Dear First Universalist Community, I write from the minister's office of our "downtown gem", where I have now been settled for three weeks. My move to Rochester went very smoothly, and I cannot thank you enough for your kind welcome as I have been settling in. Today the sounds of life waft through my study window with the afternoon light: from the hammering of new roofing going up overhead, to the rush of cars and the murmured conversation of people traveling through their days down on Clinton and Court streets.

Each day I have been taking walks to get to know our church neighborhood, bit by bit. I hear and see life abundant in this city. It is impossible to miss the optimism in the air, the shared sense that Rochester is on the edge of a new chapter. There is trust in the promise of the years to come.

And in this lively, hopeful city, First Universalist is a lively, hopeful church. There is an energy here that is truly inspiring. You have worked hard, and your faithful commitment, warmth of welcome, and love of your neighbors have led you this bright time. Imagining all that will happen under our new roof in the year ahead-- the connections, the worship, the learning, and the witness in the world that will begin here-- I am strengthened, as I hope we all may be, by what minister Tom Owen-Towle called the three pillars of Universalist faith: hope, courage, and love. How happy I am to be here with you, and to be a partner in this chapter of First Universalist's ministry.

As September nears and I look ahead to the start of our first church year together, I find myself thinking of the Buddhist idea of "beginner's mind." Beginnings always come with some feelings of uncertainty, for all of us. "Beginner's mind," though, is a state of openness, a blessed awareness of many possibilities. It is something the wise seek deliberately to cultivate; for beginnings are also times of creativity, when new ideas, opportunities, and gifts often present themselves... and when we find we have the courage and lightheartedness to reach out to receive them without fear.

May we embrace this time with gladness.
Yours in faith, - Celie ❖



Walking Together:

Faith Development & Religious Education

Submitted by Michelle Yates, MRE

In mid-August, when national news was rife with chaos, I was "disconnected." There is something to be said for a vacation with no connection to the world outside of hollering range. It helps me consider the ways that we connect to each other. While my extended family and I couldn't affect the news we heard upon returning to "signal range," the deeper relationships we had developed served as a vehicle to hold all the feelings that arose.

I realized that the context in which I hear news about the world matters. Do I hear about it alone or do I share it with others? Do I feel I can share my feelings about and process the information within a community, or do I feel isolated? In our modern lifestyles it is far easier to be lost in a typhoon of "news" than it is to be swept away in a personal connection, but it is the personal connection that tends to be most longed for.

September and the start of a new church year feels more like the start of a New Year to me than January. Perhaps given the perspective and fresh air of summer time, I am reminded of what I really want, of who I want to be, and of what is most important. The start of the new church year means renewing old connections and starting new ones. It can mean hope and homecoming; challenge and discovery.

I can't tell you how excited and grateful I am to step into this "new year" of connections and relationship as your Director of Faith Development and Religious Education. In the year to come, I hope our relationships and faith programming will continue to offer ways to connect, to process whatever news comes our way, and to find inspired ways to move forward together; to Nurture the Spirit and Serve the Community; to Walk Together!

Yours in Faith,
Michelle ❖

~RAIHN~

**Keeping families together;
getting families home.**





Greetings & a Survey

Submitted by Bryan Holten

Greetings, friends! I'm so excited about the upcoming year at church. I'd like to extend a special welcome to choir members, who on September 7 will begin our regular rehearsal schedule once more. We meet at 9:00 each Sunday morning, with a few exceptions that will be reflected on the church calendar. If you are interesting in "trying out" the idea of choir membership, now is a great time to join us as we learn new pieces for the upcoming season.

All who attend services at First Universalist are invited to complete a six-minute music ministry survey at <<http://tinyurl.com/pl7ndnq>>. In accordance with my reminder that "it's your music program," I seek input to inform the process of making this year a great one for music in church. The survey remains open through September.

On a personal note, I want to thank all of you for your kind thoughts, visits, and messages during this summer's project of healing my overused left knee. Be assured that no surgery whatsoever was involved; in fact, I undertook this strict resting regimen in hopes of avoiding the need for surgery. So far, I can cautiously report success. My knees will be ready for playing the Hope-Jones in September! Looking forward to seeing you then. ❖

Hold the date: Special Congregation Meeting September 21

Submitted by Ed Deller

A special congregational meeting will be held immediately after the September 21 service to vote on a proposal to take a loan from our endowment for the outstanding exterior renovation project costs. Addition information will be forthcoming. ❖

Finance - Lend a Hand

Submitted by Ann Rhody

Finance: You Don't Have to be Rich to lend a Hand!! So you're not Bill Gates or Warren Buffett.... but you can still have a very valuable role in strengthening our church's finances! How?

Our church's fundraisers play an important part in balancing our annual budget. Here are some ways you can help:

- Save your loose change for the annual change drive, November 2 and 9.
- Plan to contribute a homemade craft item, new "re-gift" item, or baked good for our Holiday Shoppe. Items which can be sold for under \$20 are the best sellers for this event, taking place during coffee hour between November 30 and December 21.
- Think about a service you can donate as an item in our Service Auction, to be held February 8, 2015.
- Volunteer to help the finance committee at one of these events! You can sign up for a single short job like bringing food for the Auction lunch or staffing the Holiday Shoppe table one Sunday, or take on more of a leadership role, like organizing Auction volunteers.

More information, as well as sign-up opportunities, will be forthcoming as the church year progresses. Right now, we want to get you thinking! If you'd like to help, or if you have more questions, please contact Ann Rhody (annrhody@yahoo.com) or Paula Marchese (pmarchese@rochester.rr.com). ❖

Where's my Outlook?

Submitted and Revised by David Damico, Editor

We would like to offer a more mobile alternative to the readers of our monthly newsletter, *Our Outlook*. In keeping with our 7th principle, respect for the interdependent web of existence, with this issue, we have mailed the printed copies only to those who have requested it. Would an electronic version fit in your lifestyle?

Haven't received your paper copy? Contact the church office by email (fristuu@frontiernet.net) or phone (585-546-2826) to let Kris know what form you wish to receive the monthly *Our Outlook*. Don't miss out on the wide variety of events going on in our congregation. ❖

Communications Committee

Submitted by Nancy Gaede

On November 4, 2014, The First Universalist Board of Trustees approved the creation of a communications committee. The purpose of this committee is to “provide a centralized point for coordination and guidance of both internal and external communications for First Universalist consistent with the Communications Policy set by the Board of Trustees.”

On August 5, the committee held its first meeting. Lisa Gwinner is serving as chair. Members include Connie Valk, Nancy Gaede, and Newcomb Losh, with the Reverend Celie Katovitch, Kris McCarty-White, and David Damico as ex-officio members.

The committee is exploring ways to best utilize our internal and external communication tools: the Outlook and e-Outlook, the website, the bulletin boards, and Facebook, to name a few. We have started to work on making the Clara Barton bulletin board more informative and appealing.

One over-arching question is: how do we let others know what makes our church and congregation special? An important part of our process will be to clearly and succinctly define what sets our church apart, so that we can communicate to the larger community who we are and what we have to offer to each other and to the world outside our doors.

We plan to meet monthly, and would welcome your ideas and responses to our efforts. What is working? What needs to be improved? Contact any member of the committee with your thoughts. Look for more news from us in future Outlooks. ❖

Drop-In Discussion, September Schedule

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

Drop-in discussions are held each Sunday in the adult lounge on the second floor of our church. We meet at 9:15 a.m. except during July and August. 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.

September 7 | *The Afterlife*

Universalism is the doctrine that a loving God will not send any of his children to Hell after they die. But what, if anything, happens after we die? How do our beliefs about the afterlife affect the way we live? Phil Ebersole will lead a discussion.

September 14 | *Israel and Palestine*

How did they get that way? What does the future hold? Is there anyone willing to take the first step for peace? Harvey and Janet Rothbeind will co-host a discussion.

September 21 | *An Addictive World*

Paul Graham wrote a provocative article <http://www.paulgraham.com/addiction.html> in which he argued that all of the things we describe as addictive are accelerating and we should not want to stop the process. Bill Elwell will lead a discussion of our own addictions and of how we are living and have always lived in an addictive world.

September 28 | *Police Militarization*

Harvey Rothbeind will lead a discussion.

If you have a topic you think should be discussed or want to lead a discussion, speak to Phil Ebersole. ❖

Leadership Assembly

Submitted by Ed Deller

Hold the date: **First Universalists's annual Leadership Assembly** will be held **Saturday, October 18.**

The tentative time is 9am–1pm. All committee chairs, board members and others in church leadership roles are encouraged to attend. More details to follow. ❖

Church Library, Bookstore Reopen

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

The First Universalist Library and Bookstore will reopen Sept. 7, and will be open for the rest of the church year in the Clara Barton lounge during coffee hour.

Our library wall shelves contain a unique collection of books on Unitarian Universalism and other topics of interest to religious liberals. Books may be borrowed for three weeks by any member and by any friend who has been attending long enough to get a name tag.

We have a table of new UU and liberal religious books for sale at our cost, all or most at a discount from the list price. We have freestanding shelves of used books for sale, most of them for 25 or 50 cents. And we have a rack of magazines free for the taking.

If you have a library book you borrowed last spring or before, we would be grateful if you return it. If you have interesting books or magazines in good condition you no longer want to keep, we would be grateful for the donation.

And finally, if you like people and like books, you might consider joining the Library Committee. Speak to Keith Stott or Phil Ebersole if you are interested. ❖

2014 Backpack Donations

Submitted by Sarah Singal

Our social justice plate in May provides funds for backpacks to be given to School 7. Every year there are some children in every class who arrive without backpacks, and over the last several years First Universalist has given the school backpacks. Teachers identify which children need a backpack and send them to the school offices to pick one out. Thank you for your donations last spring! Anyone who is interested in buying backpacks for this program please see Sarah Singal (ssingal@rochester.rr.com). We usually shop after school has resumed to get the best bargains. You will be reimbursed. This is a wonderful way to help our School 7 children! ❖



Library News

LIBRARY

Submitted by Keith Stott

How well are our souls growing with the source and meaning of life – on a daily basis? Are some things too “everyday” to inspire and keep us growing? Such as a jar of buttons, applesauce, grasshoppers, or spiral notebooks? Well, let Ted Kooser, former Poet Laureate of the United States, show you some ways in his book, *Delights and Shadows*, for which he received the Pulitzer Prize.

You will find that Kooser is very good at making the everyday sacred and inspiring. (e.g. Telescope: This is the pipe that pierces the dam that holds back the Universe.)

Call number is **811.54K**. ❖

And God said,
I look out, not down.
But who will I look out to, if not to you?
I believe in you.
But who will believe in me, if not you?
I care for you.
But who will care for me, if not you?

Kirk Perrow III, Washington, DC, © 2006
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Book Club

Submitted by Shirley Bond

The Book club selection for the month of September is:

Year of Wonder by Geraldine Brooks.

“A glimpse into the strangeness of history that simultaneously enables us to see a reflection of ourselves”.

No in-depth analysis... Different opinions welcomed.

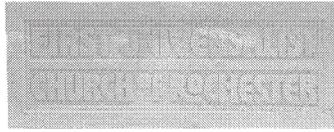
Sunday September 28th, 12:15.

For further information please see or e-mail bondshirl@yahoo or Sarah Singal@rochester.rr.com ❖



Auld Lang Syne

Submitted by Karen Dau, archivist



EARLY IN 1842, four years before the incorporation of our present-day congregation, several devoted Rochester Universalists established a weekly newspaper devoted to their cause which they named the *Western Luminary*. This was not a church newsletter, but rather an independent publication focused on the interests of the faithful in Western New York. Besides sermons, its contents included mostly articles explaining, defining, challenging and defending Universalist theology and positing Universalism as the true form of Christianity. There were also items such as news related to local societies, clergy placements, letters, poems, accounts of new churches, marriage and death notices—some forty years before such records were kept in New York State—and frequent sniping between newspaper editors struggling in a highly competitive market. Rev. Charles Hammond, the most colorful of the *Luminary*'s editors, had served as pastor of the embattled early Rochester society from June of 1843 until its dissolution a year later, and his unsuccessful struggles to keep it viable clearly influenced the tone of his newspaper editing. In 1843 he railed against an article in the *Universalist Union*, based in New York City, in which the prominent Rev. Thomas J. Sawyer criticized the Universalist periodical market for the proliferation of short-lived papers published in small towns with insufficient financial backing which undermined the support of the older, larger papers in the state—and specifically named the *Luminary*. “[T]he members of our denomination,” Hammond snapped, “will, no doubt, publish just as many papers as they please, and of just the

size they please, and as long as they please; and we see no remedy short of despotism, growing out of privileged monopolies... Our motto is ‘equal rights’... Then in 1845 Hammond took offense at a column published in a Boston paper by Rev. John M. Austin, newly settled in Auburn, New York, who had opined that finding pastors “of decent abilities and proper moral worth” was the main obstacle to building up large and flourishing congregations. “But of this much we are fully persuaded,” retorted Hammond, “that it is no uncommon thing to throw the reverses of societies onto the shoulders of the unfortunate pastor, whether he may have labored faithfully or otherwise.” But even as Hammond defended himself in the press, he outraged A. Walker, the proprietor of the prominent Utica weekly *The Evangelical Magazine and Gospel Advocate*, with accusations that Walker was endeavoring to steal his subscribers. As Hammond labored through the final months of his brief Universalist publishing career, Walker published increasingly angry replies that reveal what a cutthroat endeavor the newspaper business really was. When the *Western Luminary* at last ceased publication, probably by June of 1846, Hammond rejected Walker’s offer to buy him out and instead sold his assets to *The Star of the West*, a paper headquartered in Ohio.

Most of the *Luminary*'s issues of 1842, plus a complete run of the years 1844 and 1845, have survived into our time, and together they open a window into early Universalism in this city that cannot be found anywhere else. ❖

Dick Gilbert’s *Growing Up Absorbed* on Sale in Bookstore

Submitted by Dick Gilbert

Growing Up Absorbed: Religious Education among the Unitarian Universalists is Dick Gilbert’s latest effort to address liberal religious faith development. This book describes the function of faith as growing a soul, loving and being loved, and helping to repair a broken world. Included in its pages are a history of UU religious education, the developmental tasks of faith development and some of the thornier issues in being and becoming a Unitarian Universalist.

Beginning with Walt Whitman’s poem “A Child Went Forth” as a metaphor, Dick considers the “questions that empty the room.” The book is designed not only for preachers and teachers, but for all who wish to be absorbed by life - its peaks, valleys and plateaus.

Growing Up Absorbed will be available for purchase from the First Universalist bookstore in the Clara Barton lounge during coffee hour. Dick will gladly autograph copies. ❖

Minister's Contact Information

Submitted by Minister, Celie Katovitch

If you have a spiritual or pastoral matter you would like to talk about or are in need of a listening ear, please contact me to set up an appointment. The best way to reach me is by e-mail through the minister@uuroc.org address. I can also be reached by phone at the church at 585-325-5092. If you have a pastoral emergency, please call my cell, 315-877-3302.

For this year, Tuesday is my day of rest, on which I will not be attending to church matters or checking e-mail. In the event of an emergency, please do not hesitate to call my cell.

Invitation to INGATHERING: Water communion is a Unitarian Universalist ritual of homecoming. Keeping with the tradition of recent years, we will observe a contemplative version of this ritual accompanied by peaceful silence and music. All are invited to bring a small vial of water for the ceremony, representing a meaningful place or encounter that has nourished your spirit this summer. (Water will be provided in the sanctuary as well.) ❖



Potluck and Entertainment

Submitted by Connie Valk

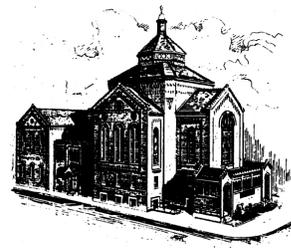
Canada's Circus Orange – a troupe that mixes circus, dance, fire, and theater – is performing “Tricycle” at Martin Luther King Jr. Park, a block away from our church on Friday, September 19. And, it's free!

You are invited to start out the evening with a potluck at church at 5:30 PM. Then, after we clean up, we'll bring our lawn chairs to the park and get ready for the entertainment, which starts at 7:30 PM for an hour-long show. This is a family friendly event, open to everyone, sponsored by the Membership Committee. ❖

Exterior Renovation Update

Submitted by Ed Deller

Work is in full swing to replace the roof and repair carpentry and masonry at the high areas of the church. The contractors have started at the highest sections and are working their way to lower areas. The work is expected to go into early October. ❖



House News

September 2014

Submitted by Tom Ruganis

Enter Rejoice and Come In!

The banner made by Mary Louise Gerek now hangs over the Welcome Table to be viewed as people come into the Clara Barton Lounge. This was presented to the Church in recognition of Martha Munson's tenure as our interim minister.

Heating System

The leaks in the steam heating system will be repaired in early September in preparation for the upcoming heating system.

Screens

Some of the windows in the RE wing have been fitted with screens to allow bug-less cooling for members and Raihn guests alike.

Fall Clean Up

Yes, it is that time again. Time to start thinking about our fall clean up Saturday. Please look around and note any area that you think needs a little cleaning, repair or other attentions. Please let Tom Ruganis know at tom.ruganis@frontier.com of your ideas. Thanks!

Security Reminder

There have been a few occasions that windows were left unlocked and upper windows left open. Always try to make sure the building is safe and secure if you are one of the last to use an area. Thank you! ❖