



Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

MINISTER

Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell
minister@uuroc.org

MINISTER OF LIFE SPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT

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

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Dr. Brock Tjosvold
music@uuroc.org

OFFICE MANAGER

Emma Barry
office@uuroc.org



First Universalist
Church of Rochester

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

Sunday Services | January 2023

January 1 | *Letting Go of What No Longer Serves - Fire Communion*

At the beginning of 2023, First Universalist will host a ritual of releasing. Come prepared with a thought or two about patterns in your life you would like to release. Patterns of relationship or ways of being that may be causing harm to you or even may be out of alignment with your values.

— Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell

January 8 | *As Above, So Below*

Holding the balance of what happens under ground with what happens above ground, this service is an exploration of the ways that what happens behind the scenes informs what happens right out in the open. Are there things we believe we are keeping secret? Are there actions at work out of sight informing the choices we make?

— Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell

January 15 | *Let Justice Roll Down Like Water*

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's legacy is a call to all of us to commit to realizing more justice in this world. On a Sunday where First Universalist shares its offering with Rural and Migrant Ministries, we explore how to align our words, actions, and deeds with the vision of a world where justice is for everyone.

— Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell

January 22 | *The Odd Duck and the Growing Edge of Universalism*

If boundaries are a container for care, how might we consider or reconsider our boundaries, expectations, and outreach in the light of "radical inclusivity?" What does it look like to be radically inclusive of neurodivergence in people of all ages?

— Rev. Michelle Yates

January 29 | *Both Firm and Flexible*

Beginning the seasonal theme of Boundaries, let's explore when boundaries must be held firm and when they can move and sway. What situations call us to rigidity? And where can we embrace more fluidity in our lives?

— Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell

❖ Services begin at 10:30am ❖

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

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What to Bury, What to Dig Up

Message from
Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell

January is a month when the church transitions from the seasonal theme of Under Ground to Boundaries and it has me thinking about what we bury and what we dig up in our own lives. Within each of us resides stories and experiences that we do not share with anyone else—this is a part of the human condition. It is impossible to fully share oneself in entirety with another person, let alone more than one person. Each one of us has things we keep to ourselves—our interior lives. And these pieces of ourselves that we keep to ourselves are quite precious—kept there for any number of reasons.

Yet, there are conditions when it is time to dig up the past, to dig up experiences to share with another person. Perhaps because you trust them. Perhaps because you have a helpful experience to share. Perhaps because you are ready to say something you just weren't ready to say before. Perhaps because the ripening under ground will turn to rot if the fruits of your life are not brought above the soil, out into the light—it could be doing you harm to keep these things to yourself.

The decision is what intrigues me. And the spiritual conditions of when we are ready to share. In our connection to spirit, we can decide what to share and what to keep to ourselves. In our feelings of safety and protectiveness, we can offer something that has as of yet gone unspoken. In our own instinct and intuition, we can know when the moment is not right, when to bury something as a healthy response to external factors. How do you know what to bury and what to dig up? May you find both intention and awareness around this boundary in the days and weeks ahead.

In Faith and Courage,
Rev. Lane-Mairead ❖



Under the Surface

Message from
Rev. Michelle Yates

In looking at the intersection of this month's worship themes of "Underground" and "Boundaries" I think of the song "Surface Pressure" from the Disney movie *Encanto*.

Encanto came out during the pandemic and its gift to all of us was the way it addressed perfectionism and family or societal expectations. The character that Disney did not expect to be one of the most popular in the movie was Louisa.

Louisa's magic gift is that she is super-strong and tough, but she shares how under the surface she is afraid. She doesn't want to take on all these hard tasks, but she is afraid she is worthless if she can't do everything asked of her. Louisa hides her needs and feelings "underground," and they are festering into a paralyzing self-doubt.

She wonders, "If I could shake the crushing weight of expectations would that free some room up for joy or relaxation?" She needs to know she will still be loved and have inherent worth and dignity if she is not always "the strong one."

To me, the lesson here is about being aware of our needs and feelings stewing under the surface and finding ways to share them and set healthy "Boundaries." Louisa needs her family's help in supporting realistic expectations and boundaries.

I'm sure each of us has things that we feel are asking too much of us. How do we say "no"? Are there things we really want, but can't pursue because of other commitments? What support do you need to be reminded that you are loved and that your needs and feelings are important? What boundaries would help you to care for and acknowledge your inherent worth and dignity? What would help you to appreciate the abilities and boundaries of others?

At the end of *Encanto* the message is that it is not each person's magic gift that is "the miracle." It is love and relationship of care shared between the people that is "the Miracle." A Universalist message if ever I heard one. I can't wait to hear what you find!

Yours in the Journey,
Rev. Michelle ❖

Finance News & Notes

Submitted by Ann Rhody, Finance Chair

What Joy!

- Thank you for the generous contributions toward staff bonuses! Each of our staff members received a bonus in time for the holidays.

- As of this writing, the holiday treat sale has brought in \$341 and LOTS of smiles! The Clara Barton Lounge was abuzz with activity once again as we shared coffee, recipes, and treats. Thanks to all who baked, created, and bought!

- With help from the Finance Committee, Board of Trustees is continuing the process of determining how best to use the recent bequests we have received.

Next Up: Slow Rolling Service Auction!

How it works:

- Members and friends donate events and services (housecleaning, gardening, lessons, etc.) and gatherings (dinners, hikes, online games or happy hours). You can donate online by following the link on the website. Deadline for donations is Sunday, January 15.

- A catalogue of offerings will be available by Friday, January 20. Take a look at what's around, and what you might like to do!

- Here is the slow-rolling part: Instead of bidding on a single day, you'll sign up for an event or service, starting after the service on January 22. We'll ask that you limit yourself to two items during the first Sunday of sign-ups, to give everyone a chance to get something they want.

- Sign ups will continue after the service on January 29.

- Online participants will use the Proxy Form in the Auction catalogue. Your choices can be emailed to the auction team prior to the Sign up Sundays. Our team of proxies will sign you up and let you know what you got!

- We will ask you to "pay what you can" for each item—what would your highest bid be if this were a true auction? This way, everyone can participate and pay an amount that is right for them!

We realize that this is a little different, and we'll see how it works. Although the funds raised are important and needed for the church's budget, perhaps more important is the fun and fellowship

we get from being together and sharing with one another. We are ALL hungry for connection, so please join in!

Watch for announcements and a flyer with more details about our Fundraiser, and please contact finance@uuroc.org with questions. ❖



Flush Forum: 24/7 Toilet Access

Submitted by Connie Valk

In order to become the welcoming city Rochester would like to be, it must have 24/7 restrooms available to the public. For example, Washington Square Park, where numerous rallies and public events like the annual Dachshund Parade take place, has no public facilities nearby. Rochester's homeless population has no place to "go" and so use local church alcoves, stairwells and grounds, sidewalks, and city landscaping as their toilets.

A public forum will be held on Saturday, January 14, from 1-2:30pm at First Universalist Church to address this need. The forum can also be accessed via Zoom. Check uuroc.org for the link and updated COVID and masking policies. There is free parking on the streets. Those with mobility issues may park in the small Court Street lot behind the church.

A panel composed of experts who have had successes on installing 24/7 restrooms in other cities, and a local coordinator who works with the homeless population, will lead off the topic. There will be ample time for questions and discussion.

All are welcome to join in this exchange of information and call for action. ❖

Drop-In Discussion

Submitted by Beth Ares

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

Jan. 3 | *How can individuals and a church help to realize a Regional Climate Action Strategy?*

We will hear an overview of the Accelerator's Climate Action Strategy; we will discuss what the EcoJustice members and attendees find of interest and how we could have maximum impact. Presenters: Brady Fergusson, Director of Public Engagement, Climate Solutions Accelerator and our EcoJustice group.

Sunday, Jan. 8 | *Life with My EV *In-Person**

I have been driving a fully electric vehicle for a few months now. I will share benefits, drawbacks, range anxiety, dispel a few myths, and answer any questions you may have. Presented by David Damico.

Jan. 10 | *Watch Your Language*

A conversation about our own racism—how we laud the Native American nations that are preserving their language, but label other cultures as “uneducated”. Theo Munson and Beth Ares present.

Jan. 17 | *Open Topics*

We love to chat our way into a profound and unexpected subject.

Jan. 24 | *Article II—Revision of the UU Principles*

Several amendments to the Principles have been proposed since last revised in '87. The UUA knows this is a Big Deal and has a whole study commission working on collaborating with the association of churches (that's us). They've asked us to offer our feedback. You can read more about it here (uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission) or just “drop-in.” Presented by Rev. Michelle Yates.

Jan. 31 | *Magical Thinking*

What is it? When is it beneficial and when is it harmful? John Lukes presents.

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



EcoJustice: Important Upcoming Dates!

Submitted by Sarah Singal

The EcoJustice Group usually meets the first Sunday of the month, 15 minutes after the church service on Sunday in the Chalice Room. The first EcoJustice meeting of the new year is on February 5. All are welcome.

- **January 1:** No EJG meeting. Check out our portable bulletin board in the Clara Barton Lounge at coffee hour.
- **January 3:** Drop in Discussion: come listen then discuss the Climate Action Strategy of Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee/Finger Lakes, with Brady Fergusson. What can an individual or a church do to promote local sustainability? Online 6:30-7:30pm via Zoom!
- **January 6:** Join us at Squatcho's, at 17 East Main Street. Meet at church and walk over to a downtown vegan pizza restaurant. We can make some plans for Earth Month, April. Let us know if you're coming so we can let you know of any changes in scheduling due to bad weather at EcoJustice@uuroc.org.
- **February 5:** Regular first Sunday meeting, 15 minutes after the end of church service, in the Clara Barton Lounge (unless there's a church auction that day).

And if you have recently read *Under a White Sky* by Elizabeth Kolbert and been discouraged about where the last chapter left us, try a very recent book with an upbeat message: *Climate Resolution, The Only Future That Will Sustain the Human Race* by Peter Fiekowsky. He explores recent ideas for removing CO2 from the atmosphere, ideas that he feels could be feasible and scalable and with a group of various experts is off to try to make that happen. But please keep up and amplify all the good mitigation measures you have adopted and lobbied for! ❖



F.I.R.E Update: *Sparking into a Social Justice Circle*

Submitted by Theo Munson

We are very pleased to announce a renewed look for F.I.R.E. (*First Universalist Initiative for Racial Equity*), which will be sparking its way into a Social Justice Circle going forward! Since our 2019 congregational vote that created F.I.R.E., we are pleased now to continue our work: supporting the Minister Franklin D. Florence Civil Rights Heritage Park and developing activities that deepen our commitment to racial equity. Together we will explore avenues to expand our understanding of Rochester's past in order to create a more just future. Your enthusiasm and energy are essential ingredients as we go forward. ❖



Sign up to help MOCHA: *Ministry of Coffee Hour Activities*

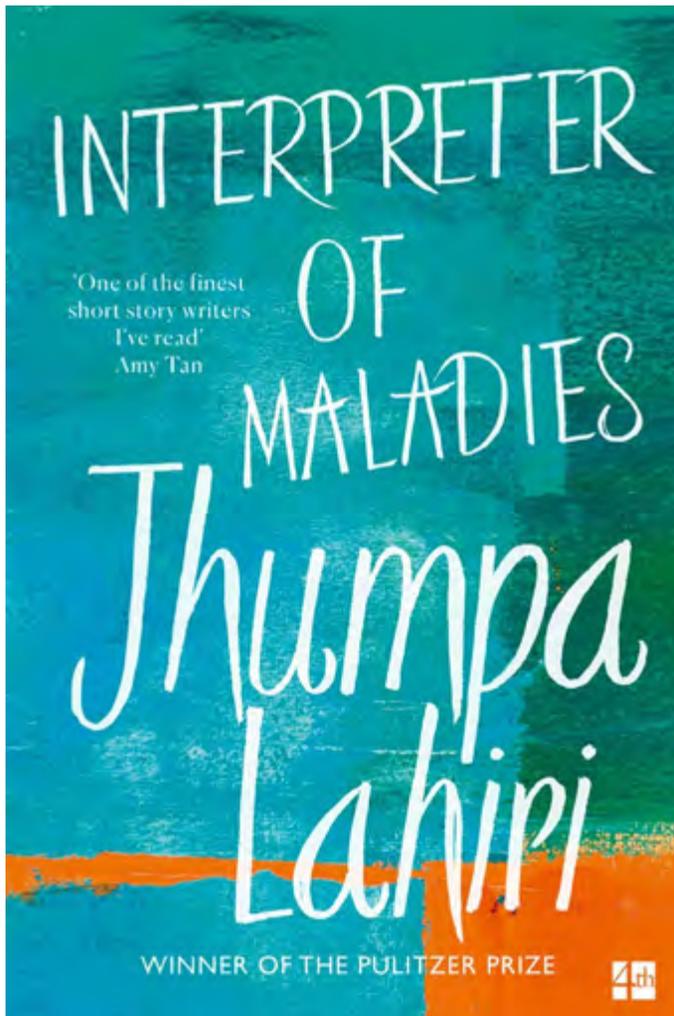
Submitted by Nancy Gaede

Would you be willing to help support our coffee hour some Sunday? All supplies will be provided. Here's what you'll need to do:

- Come in about a half hour early so that you can have things ready to go when the service ends.
- The coffee maker needs to be plugged in and heating up for at least 10 minutes before making coffee. Each pot of coffee takes about 5 minutes to brew. Each coffee carafe takes about 2 pots to fill.
- Set treats out on the table. They are currently prepackaged, so this is quick and easy.
- Napkins and paper plates available as needed.
- Set the coffee dispensers up on each end of the table, along with half-and-half, non-dairy creamer, powdered creamer, sugars, spoons. The contribution box needs to be set out, as well.
- Continue to check on coffee and creamers, refilling as needed, during coffee hour. Please stop making coffee and consolidate the pots when it seems like coffee hour is winding down.
- When the crowd starts to thin, let folks know that you'll be picking up so that they can grab that last cup, if they want to.
- Wash up the mugs, spoons, pots, etc., and put everything away.
- Put the contributions in an envelope, seal it, and leave it in in the MOCHA tray in the volunteer office.

There is a signup sheet on the refreshment table. We'll send you a reminder before your date, along with more detailed instructions. We appreciate any help that you can give.

Thanks in advance! ❖



Book Group

Submitted by Shirley Bond

Jhumpa Lahiri's collection of short stories, *Interpreter of Maladies*, is our book discussion selection for January 8. It is an excellent read. Jhumpa skillfully binds together lives of former strangers. The stories are set in both India and America and it is amazing how she is able to keep our interest in the nine stories separate but equal. Please join us Sunday, January 8, at 12 noon in the Chalice Room. If you didn't get a chance to read all the nine short stories, no worries. We like to exchange ideas. Hope to see you there.

We meet on the second Sunday of most months. Questions answered by: Shirley B., 325-6084 or Pam J., 738-2558. ❖



Church Archivist Needed!

Submitted by MJ Curry

Are you interested in preserving our church history, past, present, and future? UUROC is seeking a new church archivist—a volunteer position with a variable time commitment. This year, a grant from the New York State Convention of Universalists has funded us to hire a local archivist to organize the church archives and create archiving guidelines for the future, encompassing both digital and physical archives. The new archivist will take over a well organized collection. If interested, please email archives@uuroc.org. Thanks in advance! ❖



Credit: XKCD.com

PROTIP: IF YOU'RE NOT SURE WHAT TO SAY, TRY "SO IT HAS COME TO THIS"—IT CREATES INSTANT DRAMATIC TENSION AND IS A VALID OBSERVATION IN LITERALLY ANY SITUATION.

Message to the congregation from the Board of Trustees

Greetings Everyone!

One of the major tasks of your Board of Trustees is to assess and articulate the shared vision of our congregation. Throughout this past fall, we have worked together with church leadership to find expression of our current values. After many deep conversations we have summarized a vision for the year ahead in the form of two guiding questions and a set of initiatives that answer those questions. It is our hope that this sense of where we are and where we would like to focus our efforts will help all of us direct the work of our beloved church community.

Here are our questions and their associated initiatives:

Our Vision 2022-2023

Guiding Question #1:

How do we build a vibrant, intergenerational, growing church?

Intention 1: Increase our visibility in the community

Intention 2: Use our building to its fullest potential

Guiding Question #2: In what new ways can we nurture and connect our loving community?

Intention 1: Intentionally include our on-line community in all areas of the church

Intention 2: Create a culture of care and communication that includes everyone

Intention 2: Explore the meaning and implications of “Radical Inclusivity”

The process of developing this vision stimulated lively conversation. We look forward to engaging in further conversations with everyone as we learn about how our committees and teams are finding ways to express this vision.

With our best winter holiday wishes,
Steve Munson, *President, Board of Trustees*



First Universalist Church of Rochester

150 South Clinton Avenue
Rochester, NY 14604



First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY

Nurture the spirit and serve the community.

First Universalist Church is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association, a liberal religion with historical roots in the Jewish and Christian traditions.

**Worship service begins at 10:30am on
Sundays**

Minister | Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell

Minister of Life Span Faith Development |
Rev. Michelle Yates

Music Director | Dr. Brock Tjosvold

Office Manager | Emma Barry

Nursery Care Provider | Carol Williams

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Editor, monthly newsletter, *Our Outlook*, & *This
Week at First Universalist* (digital): Emma Barry

More info is available on our website: uuroc.org

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