



Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

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Church of Rochester**

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Sunday Services | March 2023

March 5 | *The Line in the Sand*

In the work done for justice, where are lines and boundaries helpful? An old freedom chant asks, “Which side are you on my people? Which side are you on?” When straddling the line is costly to the lives of the oppressed, the call is to take a position and fight for what is right.

— *Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell*

March 12 | *What is to Love About a Slog?*

There are things worth slogging through and slogging for. Where might a slow approach be of benefit? And what experience do you bring of a slow process being enjoyable?

— *Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell*

March 19 | *The Joy of Conflict*

Sometimes we avoid conflict because it's hard or uncomfortable or someone taught us it wasn't appropriate. But in this season, let us wonder together in what ways conflict might bring us growth, connection and even joy?

— *Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell*

March 26 | *The Long Journey of Visibility*

Celebrate Transgender Day of Visibility with First Universalist. As transgender and gender non-conforming people live lives out loud, the journey towards individual and collective visibility is a long one. And as laws continue to roll out across our nation cutting off access to vital health care for trans people, let us explore what we all can do to support trans visibility.

— *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. ❖



Patience with the Slog

Message from
Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell

I must admit that there are many times in a day I wish the world would move faster. I enjoy driving fast. I enjoy the efficient process. I love when multiple things can be addressed at the same time. And I get so annoyed when a line presents itself or I find myself in traffic or, worst of all, a project gets delayed and delayed and delayed.

But I am going to say there is magic in that moment when that project has been delayed or the traffic clears and we arrive at a place that it was hard to imagine before. There is so much value in taking our time through things, even though it can feel difficult sometimes. To slog through often leads to decisions and possibilities we could have never previously imagined.

This month, we begin our seasonal theme of Slogging with Spirit, which is largely about discernment and process and the journey it takes to get to where we are heading. In this month, I wonder when things have taken a longer time than you had expected and what happened because of that. I wonder about moments when you really had to dig deep to keep going. I wonder what helped you slog along, even in moments when the destination seemed so far away you might never get there. Because sometimes the slog is worth it. And we all need to be reminded of that again and again.

In Faith and Courage,
Rev. Lane-Mairead ❖

Cozy Night Supper Returns!

Submitted by Rev. Michelle Yates

A potluck and program favorite returns to First Universalist on March 31, 6-8pm. In the first hour we eat, in the second hour we'll consider a primary value of Unitarian Universalism from the proposed revision to Article II: LOVE! Contact edu@uuroc.org to RSVP and let us know what you can bring. ❖



May Your Call Be Your Compass

Message from
Rev. Michelle Yates

Graduation speeches are often powerful, but I don't know how often one stays with people like mine has stayed with me. In fact, it's the first thing that comes to mind when I think of our upcoming worship theme 'Discernment: Slogging with Spirit.'

Our speaker at my graduation from seminary was Renita J. Weems, author of *Listening For God: A Minister's Journey Through Silence and Doubt*, a book that we had read in a required class.

In the book, Weems addresses how faith and commitment go through periods of inconstancy, and disenchantment. That all people, even ministers, struggle to maintain faith while the details of daily life compete for energy with one's relationship with God, the sacred and one's purpose in life.

In her speech, she brought up that each of us graduates had experienced some sort of "call" to bring us to that moment and that we must write that call down. To work it into the daily rituals that strengthen us and particularly in times when we feel lost. She said that we will not experience that level of call or divine inspiration daily or on-demand. In fact, we may go YEARS between hearing God's voice, if in fact we ever hear it again. Despite that, we must not forget that moment of inspiration: the feeling, the words, the commitment. We cannot let ourselves doubt that it even happened at all. We must find ways of revisiting that moment as life circumstances change in the way that we revisit the scriptures and take new wisdom from them throughout our lives.

Have you ever had a call? An inspiration, a goal or purpose that sizzled! Perhaps you chose it, perhaps it chose you. Maybe it just got lost along the way. I invite you to spend some time this month thinking about things you have been called to. Revisit them like scriptures, prophecies, or poetry that might offer some wisdom in this season of your life. How might that call inspire you again or act as a compass in your current discernment?

Yours in the Slog,
Rev. Michelle ❖

Finance News & Notes

Submitted by Ann Rhody, Finance Chair

Thank you!

Thanks to all who participated in the Slow-Rolling Auction! It was a new way of doing things, and now folks will be enjoying gatherings, lessons, services, and more! These events helped to raise several thousand dollars for the church—funds we need to support our operations. Special thanks to Paula Marchese and Katherine Flynn, who headed up the Auction; and to Dave VanArsdale for producing the catalogue of offerings.

Watch for information in this edition of the *Outlook* on other Finance-related happenings:

- Stewardship Sunday is April 16! Draw the Circle Wide and join us for Stewardship Circles
- Dick Gilbert Tribute Concert April 2—come and honor Dick Gilbert—hear his words of wisdom and connection set to music—with a freewill offering to benefit our church.

Thanks for all of the ways you support First Universalist with your time, talent, and treasure!

Please contact finance@uuroc.org with any questions or concerns. ❖

Membership Committee News

Submitted by Clinton Swingle

The Membership Committee is making plans to reach more new people in the community this year and we need more help. If you are ready to help our church membership grow, please consider joining the Membership Committee. We can be contacted at membership_com@uuroc.org.

If you are considering membership, remember in Universalism, you can bring your whole self: your full identity, your questioning mind, your expansive heart.

Together, we create a force more powerful than one person or one belief system. As Universalists, we do not have to check our personal background and beliefs at the door: we join together on a journey that honors everywhere we've been before. ❖

FIAC: Exciting Changes Coming for our Social Justice Efforts

Submitted by Connie Valk, co-chair FIAC

In the past, there have been numerous efforts in our church to serve the ever-growing population in Rochester that is unhoused and those who are on the brink of eviction:



- We helped Family Promise (formerly RAIHN) house families four weeks of each year with the help of scores of volunteers before the pandemic. Presently, we support families through meals and funding.
- Homeless Heartbeats has been a Social Justice Circle that works directly with shelters providing needed supplies and sometimes meals.
- Another group of volunteers has provided meals at the REACH Center and, since the pandemic, at motels where housing is provided on a temporary basis.
 - The Crafting Blankets for the Community Social Justice Circle has sometimes provided blankets for those living in shelters.

Our Faith in Action Council (FIAC), with Rev. Lane-Mairead, is working with these various groups to pull together as a united “Housing for All” formal, all-church project to present at the annual meeting for a congregational vote.

Leaders of the proposed all-church project are Chris DeGolyer, Lois Baum, and Marti Eggers. They will spend the next three months planning for how they unite our separate homeless efforts into one that is united to work toward two major goals:

1. Make homelessness fixable and rare.
2. Work to support efforts to create more safe, low-income housing.

FIAC will continue to support this effort and communicate with the congregation regarding the planning throughout spring so we can all be well informed before we vote in June. ❖

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!

Sunday, Mar. 5 | Reparations: How might they work? **In-Person**

Many people of goodwill favor reparations as compensation for the lingering effects of slavery and Jim Crow; but just how would they work? Presented by Phil Ebersole.

Mar. 7 | *Meditation Your Way*

Let's talk about trying or wanting to try meditation, "failing" at it, loving it, not being interested, etc. I'll share a short guided meditation plus a bit about my own practices. Rev. Peggy Meeker presents.

Mar. 14 | *Eternal Life*

Do you believe in an afterlife? Would you really want to live forever? Phil Ebersole will lead a discussion.

Mar. 21 | *Neurodivergence: Drawing the Circle Wider*

In January, Rev. Michelle Yates spoke about neurodivergence and how to open our hearts, minds, and church to those who are on the spectrum. "What does it look like to be radically inclusive of neurodivergence in people of all ages? How might we prepare to nurture and serve them too?" Let's revisit her key points, and share our thoughts, hopes, and insights. Rev. Michelle Yates facilitates.

Mar. 28 | *Open Topic*

Could be anything, but it's always something! Come with an open mind, heart and spirit.

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

Stewardship: *Draw the Circle Wide!*

Submitted by Kitty Forbush and Brian Mumey

At our wonderful church, we are able to Draw the Circle Wide. Our Social Justice Circles serve our community; caring for the houseless, raising consciousness about our environment, crocheting blankets for patients at Pluta Cancer Center and the houseless, and addressing racial inequality.

Our Caring Committee reaches out to those in our congregation who need our love and support. MOCHA brings us together after services for food and fellowship. Our choir and music director, Dr. Brock, fill our church with beautiful music. There are discussion groups, a book group and special events for families. This list goes on and on. Not to mention our spectacular ministers, Rev. Lane-Maired Campbell and Rev. Michelle Yates!

It is because of you who love this church and make your financial pledge that the circle will grow wider and wider. Stay with us—cottage meetings will be announced soon.

With love, Kitty Forbush & Brian Mumey
Co-Chairs, Stewardship 2023 ❖

From MOCHA: *Ministry of Coffee Hour* *Activities*

Submitted by the MOCHA Team

Please give these folks a big thank you for serving at coffee hour recently: Sarah Singal, Dave Van Arsdale, Elizabeth Osta, Susan Keefe, M.J. Curry, and Moritz Wagner. We on the MOCHA Team appreciate support in providing hospitality to our congregation.

The MOCHA team will serve at coffee hour 2 times a month. We need YOU to step up and help the other Sundays. Please check out the sign-up sheet at the refreshment table. Signing up is a commitment to not only serve, but also to clean up. **If no one is available to help, Albert will be asked NOT to make coffee.** All refreshments and detailed instructions are provided. So grab a friend or someone who serves with you on a committee or social justice circle, and help keep the coffee flowing at First Universalist! ❖

Want to be a WA?

Submitted by Dolores Da Lomba

Are you interested in serving as a Worship Associate (WA)? WAs assist the Minister with worship services, by speaking, and sometimes writing, elements of the service. WAs also, in coordination with our staff and guest speakers, create the script and order of service when Rev. Lane-Mairead is out of the pulpit. To be selected for the WA team, you must be a member of First Universalist who attends services regularly, interested in learning about UU theology and worship, and willing to be a reliable and supportive member of the WA team. Public speaking skills and experience are preferred. If interested please email minister@uuroc.org by April 1, 2023. ❖

Book Group

Submitted by Shirley Bond

The Book Group will meet March 12 at noon in the Chalice Room to discuss “*Someone*” by Alice McDermott. Scattered recollections of childhood, adolescence, motherhood, old age come together in this transformative narrative, stitched into a vibrant whole by McDermott’s deft, lyrical voice. We should be able to have a lively discussion about this novel so please consider joining us.

We meet on the second Sunday of most months. Any questions? Contact bookgroup@uuroc.org. ❖

Eastman at Washington Square Concerts

Concerts are held at our church at midday on Thursdays. Each concert begins at 12:15 pm and ends at approximately 12:45pm. Admission is free!

- **Mar. 2 | Inspiring Violin**

Come hear a virtuoso recital featuring violinists from the studio of Eastman professor Renée Jolles.

- **Mar. 9 | Flutissimo!**

Enjoy the ECMS Krustenjerna Scholarship Flute Choir, performing under the direction of Sophia Gibbs Kim, as they help us usher in the spring with beautiful music! ❖

March Music Notes

Submitted by Howard Spindler

There’s lots of music happening at First Universalist—and not just on Sunday mornings! A special concert featuring music composed on texts by our own Richard Gilbert will be performed at 2pm Sunday, April 2, in the sanctuary. Musicians include the *Voices of the Spirit* (vocalists Glenda Brayman, Ann Rhody, Howard Spindler, Lew Ward-Baker, with pianist Theo Munson), plus our own choir, joined by flutist Jillian Beaman. Charlie Courtsal will be at the organ. Composers include our friends Rich Wilder and Cary Ratcliff among others; Cary will also guest conduct our choir for his own piece, since Brock will be away that weekend. This was created pre-pandemic for our Service Auction, and folks who bid back then will be our red-carpet guests; but all are welcome to attend.

Speaking of Jillian Beaman: Eastman musicians performing in our Washington Square concerts this season have been grateful to Jillian, who spearheaded our effort to secure a grant from Rochester Area Community Foundation to provide for our performers. Eastman Community Music School and our church are now challenged to continue this practice into the future.

Some highlights of the current Washington Square season have included a “Baroque Brass Jam” featuring natural trumpets and sackbuts—part of the Rochester Early Music Festival last November. We have also welcomed performers from Eastman Opera: we heard brilliant performances from Handel’s *Alcina* last fall, and on March 16, we will be treated to a preview of scenes from Eastman’s spring opera, Daniel Catán’s *Florencia en el Amazonas*. Come join us, every Thursday 12:15-12:45pm.

Our Hope-Jones organ is in great condition and sounding splendid. Charlie Courtsal is the head cheerleader, and he has been instrumental (ouch, sorry) in leading a renaissance in appreciation, not just for our church family, but for the local organ community and even the national scene. Our Music Director, Dr. Brock Tjosvold, also invited a group of students from the organ department at Eastman to perform a concert on the Hope-Jones on January 29. It was a fundraiser for the students’ audition travel fund and was amazing! We hope for more collaborations in future. Next *Outlook*: watch for more organ news! ❖

Tech Team Update!

Submitted by Charlie Courtsal & Lisa Gwinner

Hi First Universalist! Did you know that a “Tech Team” has been meeting at least monthly since last June? Our team includes Charlie Courtsal (Tech Team organizer), Michael Scott (Tech Guru), Emma Barry (Office Manager), Jack Cunningham (paid staff, consultant), Karen LoBracco (Online Ministry Team organizer, hybrid services volunteer), Lisa Gwinner (meeting minutes, hybrid services volunteer), Moritz Wagner and Jim Milch (hybrid services volunteer).

We originally began meeting in order to interview consultants about improving the congregation’s audio-visual technology with the goal of improving our hybrid Sunday services. After interviewing consultants, and receiving a budget from the Board of Trustees, we found that outside consultant fees & tech costs were astronomical. We also found there were very few companies that had the time or interest in working with us. In the end, we decided to make the improvements using church volunteers, with input from Jack Cunningham, a third-year student in AV tech at the U of R. Jack was hired by the congregation last October in order to run our hybrid services. One of the advantages of his involvement is that, along with his own expertise, he has been consulting with his mentors at the university to improve and simplify our equipment.

The overarching goals of the Tech Team have been to improve the Sunday Service quality over Zoom, and to help integrate the online church community with the in-person community. This is more than just a Sunday morning concern because we would like our remote community to be able to participate fully in all church activities.

In order to reach this goal, there have been some recent equipment upgrades. The congregation has purchased an OWL device that allows those attending meetings remotely to participate with an instant view of the speakers along with a 360° view of those attending the meeting. It also provides better audio reception than a laptop or desktop computer. This is now available for use at church.

As many of you are aware, we have had problems with the online audio portion of our services recently. We have had unpleasant surprises from cords with faulty wiring, Zoom treating our Sunday Service music as background noise, and inadequate power to

certain devices. Of course, many of these problems popped up over the Christmas holidays, when staff wasn’t available to troubleshoot. Fortunately, the Tech Team has pulled together to correct these issues.

We recently purchased equipment specifically to improve the Sunday hybrid services. Last November we bought an omnidirectional microphone, which is not only better for broadcasting music, but also it picks up ambient sound in the Sanctuary, leading to a more immersive experience for folks online. We are also experimenting with microphone placement to capture ambient sound in the sanctuary.

Most recently, we bought a Stream Deck device, designed to simplify streaming over Zoom. Before Stream Deck, cameras and slides had to be individually enabled in Zoom, which is cumbersome. The new device will allow us to do these things with the push of a button. Simplifying things with the Stream Deck will mean that volunteers providing tech support during Sunday Services (when our staff is away) will find the system much more accessible. We hope that this will make it easier for you to volunteer to help as well. Michael Scott has been programming the Stream Deck and it should be in use by the time this article is published.

Speaking of volunteers, we really appreciate Karen LoBracco and her Online Ministry Team of Grushers and Coffee Hour Host volunteers for making this ministry possible! Providing greeter/usher (grusher) and coffee hour support is very easy and we hope regular attendees of the online services will consider volunteering to help out. Please contact Karen LoBracco if you’re interested.

The next phase of upgrades will be the purchase of cameras that are permanently installed in the sanctuary, which can rotate and zoom-in remotely (which can be programmed into the Stream Deck). This will make the visual aspect of our system much more versatile, simplify the setup, and remove the wires and tripods in the Sanctuary, which can be a hazard.

As we upgrade our AV tech, we are making our building more accessible and also more attractive to potential community groups and renters. But this also means that we need to increase the pool of volunteers who are trained to use the equipment, so that it can be used by groups both within and outside the church community. We welcome your offer to volunteer at any level of expertise! Please contact Charlie Courtsal if interested. ❖



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Revive Us
Again

SPRING 2023 LECTURES

CHRISTIAN FAITH & LGBTQ+EXPERIENCE LECTURE

*WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HEALERS:
ON BUILDING A GENDERQUEER MINISTRY*

MARCH

7

5:30PM

EASTERN



Lecturer: Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell (they/them),
Settled Minister at First Universalist Church of
Rochester in Rochester, New York.
Respondent: Mr. Brittan Hardgers

At CRCDS, this lecture is housed in our Gender,
Sexual, and Racial Justice (GSRJ) program.
The GSRJ program exists to promote justice in
gendered, sexual, and racial terms within
communities of faith, communities of
academic scholarship, the community of learners
that calls CRCDS home, and CRCDS's local
geographic community of Rochester, NY.

Partner congregations include:

- *Lake Avenue Baptist Church*
- *Downtown Presbyterian Church*
- *Third Presbyterian Church*

REGISTER FOR THIS ONLINE LECTURE:
CRCDS.EDU/LECTURES



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.