



Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

Minister

Rev. Lane Campbell
minister@uuroc.org

Minister of Life Span Faith Development

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

Director of Music

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 | September 2020

❖ This Service begins at 10:00 am ❖

September 6 | *Gifts from COVID*

Join your worship associates Kitty Forbush, Patti Goodwin, and Tom Williams as they share their reflections on the “gifts” of this time.

— *Tom Williams, Kitty Forbush, Patti Goodwin*

❖ These Services begin at 10:30 am ❖

September 13 | *Gathering At the River*

Let the rivers of life flow through us, even in moments when life looks strange or different. First Universalist’s annual water ceremony ingathering will tell a story of where we have been and where we are going. Please send a picture of your favorite water spot (lake, ocean, river, puddle, or wherever) to minister@uuroc.org.

— *Rev. Lane Campbell*

September 20 | *Complex and Tender Vulnerability*

How do we know we are safe to be vulnerable? And when does it feel life-affirming to share with another? Sometimes, vulnerability can be an act of deep connection, other times it can feel like we are overwhelming those around us. Vulnerability is complicated.

— *Rev. Lane Campbell*

September 27 | *Making Heart Space*

In an iconic scene in the Christmas classic, *The Grinch*, it is shown that through generosity the Grinch’s heart grows ten times. Is this possible for us? How do we grow our hearts to make room for more compassion for those around us?

— *Rev. Lane Campbell*

*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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“Blessed are the Flexible” COVID-19 & RAIHN*

Submitted by Marti Eggers

In late February of this year, once it became clear that houses of worship would likely be closing due to the Coronavirus, the RAIHN staff knew that, if RAIHN was going to continue to shelter temporarily homeless families, a new shelter location needed to be established, and quickly.

A willing motel was identified; one family, then a second family came into the program, staying at the motel. Families still needed meals to be provided by RAIHN volunteers, and several ideas were tried, always keeping masking and social distancing in mind—leaving groceries outside the doors of the guests throughout the week; leaving groceries once a week along with gift cards; and other ideas. Blessed are the flexible hosting congregations who served as guinea pigs during that time!

Families are now staying at a different motel, one that includes breakfast, relieving volunteers of having to provide for that meal. Hosting Weeks continue to be rotated among congregations, but volunteers for their Host Week need only provide gift cards for dinners and other family needs along with lunch and snack items for the week, using lists of family preferences. Volunteers then deliver the groceries and gift cards to the Day Center on the Monday of their Host Week. Lyanette Rivera, a valiant staff member, delivers the groceries and cards to the families later that afternoon.

The motel is not free; there is a minimal nightly charge. An anonymous donor recognized this need and offered \$3,000 as a matching grant to assist with motel costs. If \$3,000 could be raised quickly in June and July, the donor would match it. We invited our support congregations—St. Mary’s, Aldersgate

United Methodist Church of Greece and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints—to join in the effort. Within just a few weeks, together we raised \$4,160! Adding to this the \$3,000 matching grant, a check for \$7,160 was delivered to RAIHN to help cover the cost of the motel for RAIHN guests.

As for food and gift cards, a separate appeal went out, and generous folks donated nearly \$700, covering these costs of our recent Host Week with a little left over for next time.

The uncertainty of COVID-19 is affecting all of us, whole congregations included. When will churches and synagogues be open again for services? And when will they be open for meetings and RAIHN guests? We don’t know the answer to these questions. We do know that, in spite of guests staying in a motel instead of in our church, we still have a generous body of volunteers and other supporters willing to step up to help RAIHN families in myriad ways during these uncertain times. Thank you all!

“Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not break”!

**RAIHN—Keeping families together. Getting families home for good.*

Adult Faith Development Planning Meeting

Submitted by Rev. Michelle Yates



On Monday, September 14 at 1pm via Zoom, Rev. Michelle Yates looks forward to connecting with church members to collaborate on Faith Development programming ideas in this unique time. Please email Rev. Michelle at edu@uuroc.org if you are interested in attending or have ideas for growing our souls this year. ✚



The Love of First Universalist

Message from Rev. Lane Campbell

“Open my heart to all that I seek; Let me be part of the Love You give.”

-Henry S. Flurry. #1013 in *Singing the Journey*

What I have heard here in this church time and time again is, “If you cannot cry in church, where can you cry?” Many attribute this sentiment to a previous Interim Minister, Rev. Martha Munson. Church is where we come to open our hearts, to let some of the fears about being vulnerable or about the emotions taking over melt away and to truly embrace the reality of where we are.

This summer, this pandemic has felt like a hard time to be open about how we feel. Perhaps the encouragement has been to look for the positive so we can all just get through this. Perhaps one of our collective coping mechanisms is denial. Perhaps there have just been moments where it feels more comfortable to set aside our heart’s longings or our grief or our pain in order to just experience a day where we don’t have to think about it. But here we are, the summer is beginning to wind down and there are truths within us to honestly reckon with.

As we come back together for our fall ingathering service, it will probably come as no surprise to you that our service will look a little different this year. For this service and for the remainder of September, we will be focusing on how to open our hearts, how to remain vulnerable in the midst of uncertainty, and where we can let the walls we have built begin to soften, begin to crack open. We come together this year with hearts that may be broken, tentative, fearful, and even perhaps excited. We come together this year and that is what truly matters.

Let us be part of the Love given at First Universalist. Let us be part of the Love of community that has kept us together through this pandemic and beyond. May we lean into that Love as we start a new church year where we have no idea what it might look like. Let us lean into that Love to hold us through all that our hearts are holding. ❖



Walking Together: Of Port-O-Castles and Pandemics

Message from Rev. Michelle Yates

In early August every year, my family goes camping in PA with a large medieval reenactment group. The first episode of “*Off the Cuff*” on Amazon Prime is all about this gathering. It is usually hot, fun, and gives us a unique appreciation of running water and indoor plumbing. Given our newly potty-trained toddler, I have wondered what adventures we would have had in the “port-o-castles,” had this annual event been able to happen this year. Usually, folks in our encampment are resigned to a situation that often mirrors the pandemic experience: inconvenient, stinky, sometimes a disgusting hot mess, and shared.

There is a culture that develops around this shared experience in the campground where we work together to make it as manageable as possible. You will hear parents instructing children to wipe and put down the seat, friends “calling each other in” to clean up after themselves, and other efforts to keep the “port-o-castles” as tidy as possible. The workers who come each morning to clean them out are met with thanks and sometimes cheers.

We can each do our part to help each other, make the situation better, and support those who have tools to deal with the problem. This has recently become a metaphor for me in addressing the stinky and shared experience of the pandemic, and has me eager to be involved in our church community after my summer off!

I look forward to working with you all in a different way this year. Not only in how we meet, but in the content of our offerings. I always look for what our community’s areas of growth and interest might be.

This year I want our offerings to help guide us as UUs living right now, and I know those needs are different for everyone. Please share your thoughts and spiritual needs and look for opportunities for us to collaborate, like the Adult Faith Development Planning Meeting on September 14 at 1pm. ❖

Yours in the journey, Rev. Michelle Yates
Director of Life Span Faith Development

Drop-In Discussion Schedule

Submitted by Beth Ares

Current drop-in discussions are held each Tuesday evening from 6:30 to 7:30pm via the church Zoom account. Contact DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org for the Zoom link!

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 the discussions.

Check our website for more details as these dates approach!

September Drop-In-Discussion Dates:

- September 8
- September 15
- September 22
- September 29

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

Children and Family Faith Development Planning

Submitted by Rev. Michelle Yates



Rev. Michelle Yates will be reaching out to families to schedule a Zoom meeting for considering Children and Family programming this coming church year. If you have not received Family Updates via email or are not in the Family Facebook Group please email Rev. Michelle at edu@uuroc.org. ❖



Photo by Hunter Haley on Unsplash

House News

Submitted by Ed Deller

The House Committee has been taking advantage of the COVID-19 related shutdown to support some major projects for the church:

- Work to replace the flat roof over the minister's office started in mid-August and should be done by the time you are reading this.
- Estimates are being gathered to support a decision for resurfacing the parking lot. We are hoping to have this work done this fall.
- Final project details for the Clara Barton Lounge cold blast barrier are still being formed. Estimates from glass companies were delayed due to the Memorial Day unrest that resulted in so many broken windows downtown.
- Many areas of the church, inside and outside, need to be painted. We expect to tackle these as mini projects over the coming months. If you'd like to help please contact house@uuroc.org.

Our continued thanks go to the folks who have been checking on the church all through the summer, collecting mail, and cleaning the oft-visited Clinton St. alcove area. Special thanks go to Tom Ruganis, Karen Dau and Sarah Singal.

Do you have spare tools? The church could use some basic tools like screwdrivers, hammers, wrenches, pliers, etc. If you are downsizing and looking for a worthy place for your tools please contact Ed or others on our team: Tom Ruganis, Michael Scott, Sarah Singal, Moritz Wagner, Karen Dau, Marcy Klein, Shirley Bond. ❖

Photo by Ben Wicks on Unsplash

Annual Service Auction

Submitted by Katherine Flynn & Paula Marchese

Photo by Bill Oxford on Unsplash



Currently, our 2021 Service Auction is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, February 7, 2021. As the times are so uncertain, the Auction mavens, Katherine Flynn and Paula Marchese, have started to think about alternatives. The Service Auction is our only fundraiser and helps to support the Church programs.

Having said this, a number of folks have not yet been able to redeem their Auction purchases from 2020! There have been a number of gatherings, concerts, and activities which have been postponed indefinitely. We are sensitive to this as we look ahead to how to manage Auction 2021.

Should we plan an alternate fundraiser? Hold the Service Auction over Zoom? Do a "silent" Online Service Auction?

If we do hold the Service Auction or similar event, here are some thoughts for potential items:

- Dinner parties for 4
- Homemade Goodies: delivered to your home
- Online Cooking Lessons
- An Online Recital/Concert
- Gardening, Painting, Fix-it Services, etc.
- Treasure-of-the-month
- Online Charades/Other Games
- Scavenger Hunt
- Reader Theatre
- The return of the Green Dot painting

We invite everyone to start thinking about what they can do for 2021 (the 175th anniversary year of our congregation's founding). Please submit your ideas to Katherine and Paula. While we hope to be

back in our brick and mortar church, we need to plan for a robust virtual alternative.

This would be very different and we are not sure how it might work. Any thoughts of ideas are NEEDED. Please get your creative juices flowing and get in touch with Paula or Katherine. We are a strong bunch of folks and we will figure this out!

Thank you,

Katherine and Paula ❖

Finance Update

Submitted by Ann Rhody, Finance Chair

We are happy to report that we finished the 2019-2020 fiscal year on June 30 with a significant surplus, and we did not need to make the planned withdrawal from our endowment to support the operating fund. A combination of circumstances can account for the surplus, and the details will be in the annual Treasurer's report, which will be available this Fall.

The current fiscal year is underway, and it's too early to tell how it's going. Please remember that you can send plate offerings, donations, and pledge payments to the church by mail (*this saves the church some money in online transaction fees*), OR make payments online at uuroc.org. Just be sure to leave a note so that our collector knows what your payment is for! We understand that many of us have financial lives that are in flux or even turmoil. If you need to make a change to your 2020-21 pledge, all you need to do is let us know.

The Finance Committee has begun looking at the longer-range budgetary trends for our congregation, and the results are interesting! We will engage in looking at more data over time, and will work with the Board to identify areas of strength/concern. We look forward to sharing our findings with you!

Finally, please see the article on the left about how we might handle the 2021 Service Auction, tentatively scheduled for February 7. Katherine Flynn and Paula Marchese are working hard to plan for the best type of Service Auction, or alternative, considering the times. No matter what, we need to make sure that it includes fun and fellowship! And for that we need you and your ideas! ❖

EcoJustice News

Submitted by Sarah Singal for the EcoJustice Committee

Photo by Christian Bibo, Johnson on Unsplash



The EcoJustice theme for 2020-21 is food, including planet-friendly diets, decreasing food waste, increasing composting, supporting local growers, compassionate animal treatment, decreasing pesticide use, related social justice issues and examining the role we humans play in the interdependent web.

Many many thanks to Kate Fleury for her excellent *Our Outlook* submissions on EcoJustice matters last year. She will be focusing on gardening for now.

The EcoJustice Group meets on the first Sunday of the month after coffee hour. We especially welcome new members! Email office@uuroc.org for contact information. ❖

Green Tips from EcoJustice!

Submitted by Sarah Singal

What saves energy in the kitchen?

- Cooking with the lid on
- Steaming instead of boiling
- Using the microwave more than the stove/oven
- Baking several dishes at a time
- Using pots or pans that cover the whole burner
- Buying food in bulk
- Turning off the faucet to wash dishes
- Eating leftovers
- Composting
- Eating less meat ❖

Harvesting Justice Circle News

Submitted by Connie Valk



The Rural & Migrant Ministry (RMM) two-week day camp found itself in a dilemma. Generally, churches in Wayne County take turns providing meals for the children. This year, due to the pandemic, this model wouldn't work because of state guidelines for camps. First Universalist Church came to the rescue.

Beth Ares contacted Denise Devalk, a friend who volunteers with the Sodus School Summer Lunch Program. Denise was able to arrange for lunches to be picked-up from the Lyons High School and delivered to the RMM Summer Camp alternately by Beth, Denise and the RMM Summer Camp staff.

Connie Valk, who had been volunteering with Foodlink, arranged for individually packaged meals to be delivered to the RMM Center in Lyons, NY for supper by a team of First Universalists volunteers including Paula Marchese, Carole Hoffman, Karen Ruganis, Richard Reed, Joy Lecesce, and Lois and Greg Baum, as well as her willing personal friends.

The theme of the day camp was "Awoke!" The activities were centered on identifying abilities in the campers to apply to social change. One of the many outcomes of this camp is that when the children become adults, they go on to lead.

Campers wore masks, as well as staff. First Universalist was instrumental in making this camp able to happen. ❖

Our Creed in Deed... FIAC Team in Action

Submitted by Joy Leccese, FIAC Chair

The Buddha referred to our deeply rooted human yearnings as Hungry Ghosts. At times it seems as though we cannot ever master them. While we cannot eradicate them, we can change how we relate to them, and we can teach ourselves new behaviors, and more mindful responses to their callings.

To eradicate something as embedded in us and in our culture as racism, we must stop relying on our brains' autoresponders, which are based on fear and the need to capture and control (a war analogy). Rather, imagine catching and holding, as in embracing the helplessness we feel in moments of fear. It is not about judging, shaming, humiliating, or condemning ourselves for our own implicit racism. Rather, we can practice holding in arms of love and encouragement. Hold lightly—not tightly—to allow learning; to breathe in the suffering we see, and transform it when we breathe out compassion.

In so acting, we cultivate awareness, not of the “i” of self, but of the “I” of Self. In that sense we open to the Infinite, the All. It is that “source and meaning of life,” to which we UU’s exclaim we belong in our affirmation of faith; it is “the interconnected web, of which we are all a part.” It says we are “a part”, not “apart.” In our highest Self we are One with All. With all. And where compassion lives, there also lies our resilience. Reserves. Fortitude. Purpose. Meaning. Strength. Equanimity. Solace.

If that is as close as we come to an official creed, how do we manifest that? At First Universalist we see it in the activities we engage in every week. The Social Justice Ministries at First Universalist are “evidence-based religion” at its best. We can see, hear, and feel the effects of our “deed not creed” approach to healing a hurting world. As Rev. Dick Gilbert has stated, social justice activities are not an adjunct to our spirituality; they are our spirituality.

How are you living your faith? Where are your beliefs in action? How do you answer when someone asks you “What do UU’s believe?” Carry that little business-card-sized summary with you for a reminder. The next time someone asks what UUs believe show them. “What’s in your (spiritual) wallet?”

“Justice, based on compassion, loving kindness, joy and equanimity.”

We all carry within us the elements of the Hungry Ghosts, but we don’t have to stand idly by and watch the world suffer by being consumed by them. We can act. And when we do, the world is better for our being in it.

Watch for more conversations in the coming church year on how we can be the change we want to see. FIAC and FIRE are leading the way for our beloved community. You belong here. You are welcome here. You are loved. ❖

I Know What You Did This Sumer!

Submitted by Emma Barry

Check out what congregation members were up to this summer!



Our Saturday support tables for the downtown BLM movement provided sunscreen, water, snacks, and bathrooms!



Paula Marchese and Connie Valk relax between giving out lunches to neighborhood children in the Maplewood Y neighborhood. Hairnets and masks are the uniform. This was coordinated with Foodlink. ❖



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
Sundays (after 9/6/20)

Minister | Rev. Lane Campbell

Minister of Life Span Faith Development |

Rev. Michelle Yates

Music Director | Brock Tjosvold

Office Manager | Emma Barry

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

Nursery Care Provider |

Carol Williams & Sundae Hodge

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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.