



# Our Outlook

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First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY

December 2016

## Sunday Services | December 2016

### Dec. 4 | *Music Sunday*

Join us for this beloved annual tradition. The service will be led by our music director, Stacey Yang, and will feature the First Universalist choir.



### Dec. 11 | *Apocalypse Now*

One of the more unnerving themes of Advent is that of waiting for an end. But an end to what? Is this a message of warning, or one of comfort?

- Celie Katovitch



### Dec. 18 | *"Mysteries, Yes"*

Mary Oliver writes, "Truly, we live with mysteries too marvelous to be understood." These mysteries shimmer through the seasons of Hanukkah, Advent, and Solstice.

- Celie Katovitch



## Christmas Services

This holiday season at First Universalist, services will be as follows:

### Dec. 24 | **Saturday**

7PM Christmas Eve: our traditional service of lessons and carols.



### Dec. 25 | **Sunday, Christmas Day.** 10:30AM: "BREAKFAST CHURCH"

An informal "service" in the Clara Barton Lounge. We'll feast on a delectable potluck breakfast, share discussion around a seasonal spiritual topic, and savor some holiday readings and fellowship. Please let us know if you plan to come by signing up on the sheet posted in the Clara Barton Lounge. This will help by giving a rough head-count for planning purposes. (If you wake up on Christmas morning and want to come, but haven't RSVP'd, you are still very welcome!)





## Pastor's Perspective

Message from Rev. Celie Katovitch

If you were in church on November 13th, you likely noticed that our Sanctuary was especially full that morning. It was the Sunday after Election Day. Many of us had so much to process, and to grieve. In a special way, we needed one another, and we needed to seek connection to the holy. I am also sure that people walked through our doors-- some for the first time-- seeking sanctuary. In the days to come, many people will be feeling personally vulnerable in a new way. There has never been a more important time to reach out to the people in your life who are feeling this way, and to offer them a refuge-- first and foremost by listening, and simply being present; secondly, by standing with them when they ask for your help. There is a litany that has been making the rounds on a number of sites. The name of its author seems to have been lost, and perhaps that is because it expresses a truth that lives on the hearts of countless people (a fact which should give us some hope). It begins:

*If you wear a hijab, I'll sit with you on the train.*

*If you're trans, I'll go to the bathroom with you.*

*If you're a person of color, I'll stand with you if the cops stop you.*

*If you're a person with disabilities, I'll hand you my megaphone.*

*If you're an immigrant, I'll help you find resources.*

*If you're a survivor, I'll believe you.*

*If you're a refugee, I'll make sure you're welcome.*

*If you're a veteran, I'll take up your fight.*

*If you're LGBTQ, I'll remind you that you are beautiful and beloved.*

*If you're a woman, I'll make sure you get home ok.*

*If you're tired, me too.*

*If you need a hug, I've got an infinite supply.*

And we could add: *If you are lonely or struggling, and need a loving faith community, I'll invite you to come with me to church.*

In this month when we remember the flame of faith that illumines the struggle for liberation, the God who dwells with the poor and the voiceless, and the promise of light even in the time of longest darkness, may we be a people of hope.

In faith, --Celie ❖

## Chocolate, Coffee, and Coloring!

Need a midweek space to relax as holiday busyness begins to fill up our days? You are invited to join Rev. Celie and office manager Melissa Davies from noon to 1 on Wednesdays, December 7th, 14th, & 21st. Come listen to some meditative music, enjoy a cup of coffee and a snack, and relax with the popular practice of mandala-coloring. In addition to helping us de-stress, coloring can help tap into the "flow" of creativity, act as a centering spiritual practice, and connect us to beauty and insight. A variety of designs will be provided; no art experience necessary. Church and community members welcome. ❖



## More Music is Coming!

Submitted by Stacey Yang, Music Director

Dear members and UUROC Friends,

As the music director, I have enjoyed working with our talented choir since September. It is my great pleasure to announce that Choir Sunday will be held on the 4th December. The choir will present a program by music masters, both old and new.

The service will also include various solo and ensemble performances by choir members and myself .

### **The program includes:**

A recent Unitarian Universalist Church commission Into the silent darkness, a movement from Brahms' A German Requiem (English text adapted by Howard Spindler) and Bring O Morn, thy music ( based on the original hymn tune " Winton place").

Solo and ensemble performances will include works by Max Reger, Guy Ropartz and Renaissance period masters. ❖



# Walking Together:

**Director of Life Span Faith Development**

*Submitted by Michelle Yates, DRE*

Our Faith Development theme for December comes from the third line of our Affirmation of Faith, “and **SERVICE** is its **prayer**.”

What does that mean? How can service be a prayer?

**Prayer** is often thought of as asking for something, communicating with or connecting with something sacred or very special. Other views of prayer from world religions are as expressions of gratitude or recognition of what is most important to that person, awareness of one’s flaws and intentions to improve, a way of centering one’s self and listening for deeper insight, or sending love or kind intentions to others or the world.

For **service** to be a prayer might mean using acts of service as a mindfulness practice, to connect with or work for something one finds important, as an expression of gratitude, as an attempt to improve the world and one’s self, as a way of gaining deeper understanding, or an effort to share love with others or the world.

In the story, “Free to Believe” Judy Campbell describes it this way, “Most Unitarian Universalists believe words alone aren’t enough. We have to work to make a better world, not just talk about it.”

One of the ways we have an opportunity to make a better world this month is by supporting the efforts of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) through the Guest at Your Table project. Please look for the Guest at Your Table information boxes to keep on your table or to remind you to donate this holiday season, or consider other ways you can serve this month.



“The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays.”  
— Søren Kierkegaard

“If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough.” --Meister Eckhart

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” --Mahatma Gandhi

“To give real service you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is sincerity and integrity.” --Douglas Adams ❖



## New Young Adult Monthly Lunch Gathering!



Our Young Adults (ages 18-35) have decided to gather and go out to lunch together after service on the 3rd Sunday of each month. They will meet up in the Clara Barton Lounge after service. This month, that will be Dec 18th. The YAs look forward to getting to know each other and considering future activities, including a possible social justice activity/project.

If you are an interested young adult, please join us or contact Rev. Michelle at [edu@uuroc.org](mailto:edu@uuroc.org) to be added to our Young Adult Facebook group.

## Youth Group / Bridging Group

Our **Youth Group** will be for 9th–12th graders (or home school equivalent) meeting about two times per month.

The **Bridging Group** will support High School Seniors (or equivalent) ages 17/18 through Young Adults 20 years old or younger. It will use a Small Group Ministries format looking at life transition topics relevant to the group, and will also aim to meet two times per month.

Both will meet Sundays from 12–1:30pm.

<b>Youth Group:</b>	<b>Bridging Group:</b>
Dec 4	Nov 27
Dec 18	Dec 11
Jan 1- NO GROUP	Dec 25 - NO GROUP
Jan 15	Jan 8

# Where are They Now?

## A Two-Veteran RAIHN Family – Home for Good on Veteran’s Day

Several years ago, among our RAIHN guests was a family of four – two parents who were veterans and their two small children. Below is a letter from the Mom that the RAIHN director received recently:

Hi Kim!

I just had to share the most amazing thing that has happened to us as a family. On Veteran’s Day we received the keys to our very own home through Operation Homefront and Meritage Homes.

Operation Homefront supports wounded veterans, and they’re one of a few organizations that also donates homes to wounded warriors and their families. Most of the homes are donated bank-owned homes, but for the last 5 years, Meritage Homes has teamed up with Operation Homefront to build brand new homes. They do 2 homes a year for two families all throughout the United States.

Back in June I had seen a home available for application through Operation Homefront in an area where we were enormously interested in living. I applied and within about 2 months I received notice that “Sam” and I had been selected to receive the home they would be building. This was at the beginning of August.



I have included some pictures from the ceremony. We are so thankful and stunned at how blessed we have been lately. Plus the company I work for has been gracious enough to allow me to relocate to a much closer office. We have just been so lucky with how everything has worked out! You were always a great support to us and I just had to share this wonderful event with you.

Thanks so much for your past support Kim, we will never forget it!

Sincerely, “Sally Jones” ❖

## RAIHN Benefits – Mark your Calendars!



“A City Sings for the Season” benefit concert – Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 3pm. This 3<sup>rd</sup> annual community holiday celebration of music and dance, presented by the Rochester Oratorio Society, will be held at the Sibley Building atrium, 228 E. Main Street. Admission is free of charge, but donations of food items, cash and personal care items are accepted at the door to benefit RAIHN. Performing this year are the Hochstein Youth Singers, Maryellen Giese, the Mount Vernon Missionary Baptist Male Chorus, ROCMusic Collaborative, and the Oratorio Society Chorus. ❖

## Shop ‘Til You Drop & Dining at Benucci’s-

Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 5 – 9pm at Pittsford Plaza. Benucci’s Restaurant will again donate 20% of your dining check to RAIHN – reservations recommended - 264-1300. After dinner, head over to One World Goods ([www.owgoods.org](http://www.owgoods.org)) for some holiday shopping where a portion of the evening’s proceeds will benefit RAIHN. ❖



# Finance items

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*Submitted by Ann Rhody, Finance Chair*

## A Humbling Generosity

I have been involved in the finance world of First Universalist since about 2003, and I've learned so much as our church has gone through good times and tough times. One thing, though, that always strikes me is the profound generosity of our congregation.

One year, we faced a serious deficit due to much higher than expected heating costs. The congregation came through with special donations to offset the overruns.

In lean times, the congregation grappled with a new plan to give one plate offering per month to social justice causes- choosing to be generous even in tight financial times. That monthly plate offering continues to bless our community today.

A member left an amazing bequest, the effects of which are felt throughout the church today, and which has strengthened our financial security for the future.

Another member provided a generous matching grant for our last Capital Campaign, and the congregation responded heartily.

And most recently, individuals have stepped up with generous donations to assist with the office renovation and some needed upcoming improvements to the Clara Barton lounge.

Of course, generosity extends far beyond money; I've seen such generosity of spirit as well. Whether working to provide some TLC to our buildings at the house committee's work sessions, or choosing to become a host congregation within RAIHN, each person can have something to offer for the greater good.

As we observe Thanksgiving and move into the December holidays, I remain in grateful awe at the privilege it is to be part of this kind and generous faith community. We are truly blessed! ❖

## RocACTS Fundraiser Dinner

*Submitted by Shirley Bond*

On November 17th after much planning, the annual RocACTS fundraiser dinner was declared a roaring success. This was a sold-out event attended by over 300 concerned church leaders and advocates. Many members and friends from First Universalist attended this event.

As some of you may know, RocACTS is a local organization comprised of many faiths that believes in building community together. Public Education, Poverty/Jobs, and Criminal Justice is their focus.

Becky Elwell and myself are proud to be on the Board of RocACTS and we are excited to be members of a church that supports this organization. ❖



# What's up with EcoJustice?

Submitted by Sarah Singal

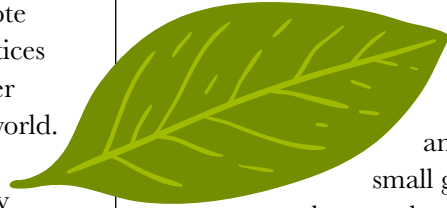
As Unitarian-Universalists we are aware that we are a part of the interdependent web of all existence. The newly formed EcoJustice Group is working to act out our commitment to protect our planet and promote sustainability, examining and improving our practices at church and at home, and connecting with larger efforts in our city, state, country and around the world. The group is open to members and friends of the congregation. It meets at noon on the first Sunday of each month (except January 1, 2017), in the Chalice Room. For questions, contact [ssingal@rochester.rr.com](mailto:ssingal@rochester.rr.com).

Protecting planet Earth is a huge project!. What does that include? How do you break it down? We can borrow some basic organization from groups that have already thought this through. One such group is Transition Streets, a program for neighbors to come together and change their behavior to protect the environment. It breaks the program down in five categories: waste, water, transportation, food and energy. This movement started in the United Kingdom in 2009, and a detailed workbook leads participants through the program. You can find more information and download the first workbook chapter on line at [transitionstreets.org.uk](http://transitionstreets.org.uk).

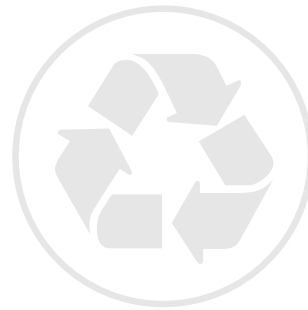
The UUA's Green Sanctuary is another basis for organization. It differs from Transition Streets, focusing on congregations rather than neighborhoods, and emphasizing social justice, connecting sustainability with anti-racism and anti-poverty. There are four focus areas: Environmental Justice, Worship and Celebration, Religious Education, and Sustainable Living. For more information go to [uua.org>social justice>environmental justice>green sanctuary program](http://uua.org>social justice>environmental justice>green sanctuary program).

The EcoJustice Group has decided to start with something well defined: waste management, specifically the 3R's: reduce, reuse, recycle. Already we have learned that the 7 R's are even better. Although some words change, the idea is Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repair, Redesign, Reinforce, and Refuse. Sometimes Rethink is substituted. We have held a recycling table with hand-outs at coffee hour, and have posted the 7 R's on the bulletin board. A tour of eco park, Monroe County's warehouse recycling center, will have taken place in mid-November. We are examining how we are doing

at church with recycling. We plan to contribute to Our Outlook and to This Week, show pertinent films, and we plan to celebrate Earth Day/Week?/Month?.



So far our meetings are filled with planning. Maybe later there will be time to reflect and share quietly, perhaps in a small group ministry setting. And surely, over the next four years, there will be occasions to join others publicly to promote sustainability and to protest practices that endanger the interdependent web of all existence. ✦



## The Book Club

Submitted by Shirley Bond



We know that there will be tremendous disappointment concerning the fact that there is no book group meeting in December!

However, the **good news** is we have a book selected for January 29th 2017!

The title is *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. This is a modern immigration story about a young woman who leaves Nigeria and her loved ones for a life in America. Twists and turns abound.

There are lots of copies in the library, so enjoy your read and we will see you in January. (Hopefully every week till then of course).

**Shirley Bond** at [Bondshirl1@gmail.com](mailto:Bondshirl1@gmail.com) or **Sarah Singal** at [ssingal@Rochester.rr.com](mailto:ssingal@Rochester.rr.com) ✦

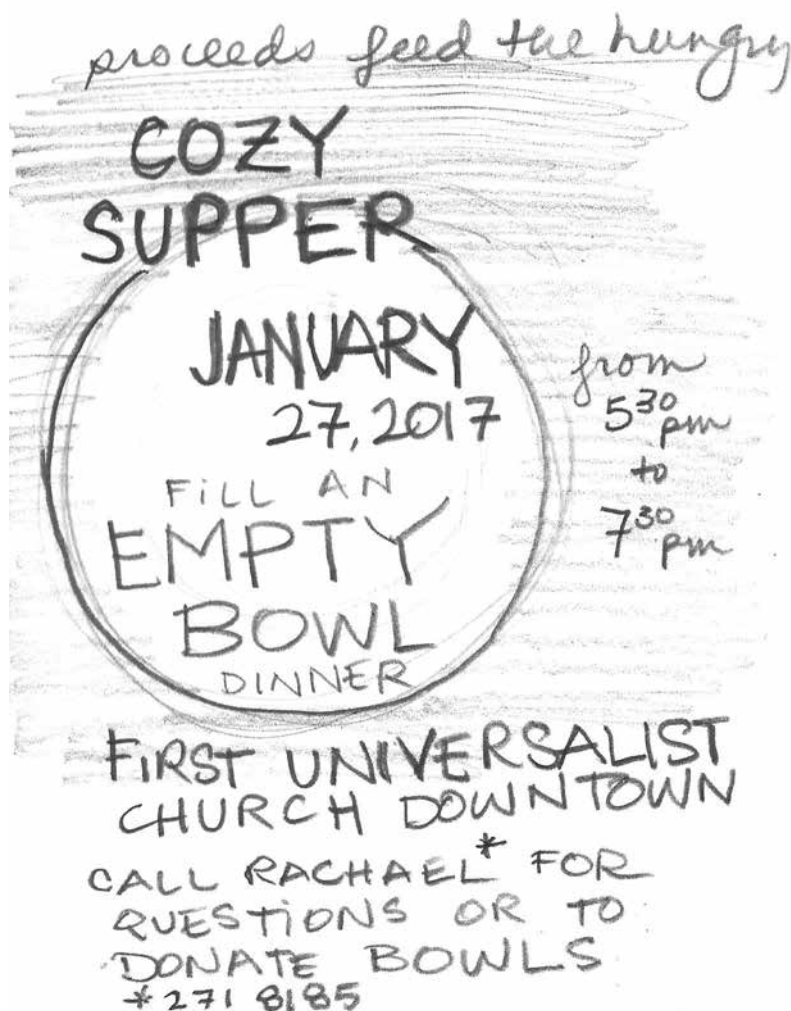
## Cozy Night Supper, Friday, Dec. 30

Submitted by *Kathy Russell*

Our next COZY NIGHT SUPPER for the 2016-17 church year will be Friday, December 30th. This dinner, from 5:30 to 7:30, completes our exploration of the Unitarian Universalist religious sources. Held in the Clara Barton Lounge, a simple supper, including a vegan option, will be provided along with wonderful camaraderie - hopefully including you! At 6:30 we will focus on the sixth source, "Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature."

Let us know of your ability to attend by signing up on the Religious Education Bulletin Board in the Clara Barton Lounge or by contacting Kathy Russell at [krussel6@frontiernet.net](mailto:krussel6@frontiernet.net). Your RSVP/sign up allows us to prepare appropriately. Child-friendly activities exploring this source will be arranged if you make a request one week in advance.

*Cooks, bakers and kitchen support are always needed.* If you are able to help providing part of the meal (expenses reimbursed) or at the dinner itself please contact Kathy. And for those who like to plan ahead, dates for other Cozy Night Suppers are January 27th (Empty Bowl project) and March 3<sup>rd</sup>. ❖



## January Cozy Night Supper

Submitted by *Rachael Baldanza*

On Friday January 27th from 5:30 to 7:30 pm, our Cozy Night Supper series will be an **Empty Bowls** event. We will consider how to help the hungry in our community. For a small entry fee, every attendee will leave with a handmade or once-loved bowl. Bowls can be donated, and spots can be reserved by calling or emailing Rachael Baldanza or Kathy Russell. ❖

## Eco-Friendly Volunteer Needed

...weekly to enter church each Monday late-afternoon or evening, to put our church recycling bins outside for Tuesday morning pick-up... until a permanent solution is found. Thank you in advance, and if you can help, please contact Sarah Singal: [ssingal@rochester.rr.com](mailto:ssingal@rochester.rr.com).

# Living Our Values, Making A Difference

Submitted by *Newcomb Losh*



**MJ Curry** dusted the pews.

About 12 to 15 of our members and friends participated in a church Fall Clean-up Day on Oct. 22. **Moritz Wagner** fixed a window in the Volunteer Office.



**Dave VanArsdale** put new batteries in a recording temperature sensor in the attic.



Fall Clean Up Photographer: Ed Deller

In Sept., our members and friends donated much-appreciated new socks and washcloths to the House of Mercy to minister to the needs of those who are people first and homeless second. Photographer: **Lois/Greg Baum.**



**Marti Eggars** hard at work in the kitchen. (I so want to say, "Marti Eggars slaved away in the kitchen.")



**Lyle Jenks** (center in ball cap) joined about 50 others to hear messages of unity, love, and peace at the CommUNITY Peace Rally in Martin Luther King Jr. Park at Manhattan Square on Nov. 19. The safety pin signals "you are safe with me." Newcomb Losh photographer.



*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.losch@yahoo.com](mailto:jnewcomb.losch@yahoo.com).*



# Drop-In Discussion Schedule, Dec. 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 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.

## December 4 | *Life With Trump*

We'll talk about why Donald Trump won the election and what a Trump presidency will mean. People of all political opinions are invited to take part. Phil Ebersole will facilitate.

## December 11 | *Infant CPR and Choking*

During the holidays, there will be lots of little treats for little folks, and the possibility of choking. Kate Fleury lead a session of lifesaving skills for our youngest family members. CRP cards will not be provided and there will be no test.

## December 18 | *Bless Our Roots*

Church members harmonize quite well and they make good things happen. It's magic! David Malone will lead as we explore how good people from diverse cultural roots and experiences combine their good skills and spirits to make a great church.

## December 25 | *No drop-in discussion.*

January 1 | *Open Forum Discussion.* No set topic. ❖

# House News - November December 2016

Submitted by Tom Ruganis

Thank you to all that helped with the fall cleanup day on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. A lot of cleaning, smoke alarm testing and small projects were completed. Check out the new mirror near the upstairs coat room area!

The group chartered to provide recommendations for the Clara Barton Lounge has started with no lack of creative ideas. Stay tuned.

We have received an updated quote for the long overdue renovation of the ceiling/walls of the Church office. This will be scheduled in the near future.

In other news:

- The leaky dishwasher in the kitchen was repaired, but another problem has arisen with the detergent feed tubes. We are currently sourcing this repair.
- A defective thermostat was replaced outside the church office.
- A new vacuum cleaner has been purchased.
- New clips for the lapel microphones were purchased.

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! ❖



## News

### *Your Diet*

What do our food choices imply – to our bodies' health, to survival of our fellow creatures, to longevity of our dear Mother Earth – and to our spiritual well-being? One of our newer library books deals with this subject profoundly. It is *The World Peace Diet: Eating for Spiritual Health and Social Harmony* by Will Tuttle. Reading this book may remind you of the significance of our chalice, the work of our architect Claude Bragdon, and further significance of our Affirmation of Faith. Call number is **613.2 T**. Happy dieting!

## **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**

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**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, Tuesday - Friday, 9-3:15. Closed Mondays. Telephone 585.546.2826*

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### **Board Of Trustees 2016–2017**

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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>.