



# Our Outlook

## First Universalist Church of Rochester

### SUMMER MINISTER

Peter House

[summerminister@uuroc.org](mailto:summerminister@uuroc.org)

### MINISTER OF LIFESPAN

#### FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Rev. Michelle Yates

[edu@uuroc.org](mailto:edu@uuroc.org)

### DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Dr. Brock Tjosvold

[music@uuroc.org](mailto:music@uuroc.org)

### OFFICE MANAGER

Mx. Emma Barry

[office@uuroc.org](mailto:office@uuroc.org)



**First Universalist**  
Church of Rochester

150 South Clinton Avenue

Rochester, NY 14604

585-546-2826

[uuroc.org](http://uuroc.org)

## Sunday Services | July & August 2025

### July 6 | *The Interdependent Web of Identity*

We are accustomed to seeing our personal identities as self-constructed, independent entities. But is this true? We will explore all of the ways in which identity is dependent upon a complex, and interdependent web of social constructs.

— Peter House

### July 13 | *This Old Brain Isn't as Sharp as It Used to Be*

We live in an age where we are all aware of racism, sexism, and all of the other “isms”, and we actively push back against them when we see them. But what about ageism? Is ageism the one “ism” that’s not only still acceptable, but the one “ism” that we ourselves practice and enable?

— Peter House

### July 20 | *The Decorations of Our Life*

The longer we live, the more we accumulate. If we really think about it, much of our lives are shaped by what happens to show up in them. We will examine just how much of who we become is shaped by circumstances beyond our control.

— Peter House

### July 27 | *What Would Bob Deyo Do?*

Have you ever known someone who never seems to worry about anything? They cruise blissfully through situations that would cause most of us extreme mental anguish. These people can be extremely frustrating to deal with. But do they have something to teach us?

— Peter House

### August 3 | *The Heart and Soul Behind the Politics*

It seems impossible these days to escape politics. We are constantly confronted with how divided we supposedly are. But are we really as divided as we think? We will discuss how to look behind the politics to see the hearts and souls of those we disagree with.

— Peter House

Inside	Page
Peter House .....	2
A Family's Gratitude .....	3
Roc Pride Parade.....	3
Drop-In Discussion .....	4
Tech Team .....	4
Stewardship .....	4
July Social Justice Plate .....	5
Finance Rerun.....	5
Times Aren't A-Changin'!.....	6
Animal Ministry.....	6
Membership .....	7

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. ♦

## August 10 | *Examining Our Self-Talk*

We all know them – impatient, prickly, snappish people who nevertheless have hearts of gold. Did you ever wonder what it's like to BE them? We will discuss how our relationship with ourselves impacts our relationship with others.

— *Peter House*

## August 17 | *Service at First Unitarian Church of Rochester*

## August 24 | *TBA*

TBA

— *Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell*

## August 31 | *TBA*

TBA

— *Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell*

❖ Services begin at 10:30am ❖



## A Minister's Dream

*A Message from  
Peter House*

This past Sunday, someone asked me how many summers I have been serving our congregation as summer minister. I thought for a minute, and I was quite astonished to realize that this is my nineteenth consecutive summer!

We have indeed navigated many, many changes together over these nineteen years. We have welcomed more than our share of full-time ministers. Each one of them has brought with them unique gifts and strengths. Each and every one of them has contributed something special and novel to our collective experience that endures.

And we have said goodbye in equal measure. These goodbyes are harder than the hellos. Endings are sad for they remind us of the relentless passage of time. While hellos are full of hope, expectation, and aspiration, goodbyes are replete with grief, regret, and a lost sense of what might have been, but wasn't, and now can never be.

Such is the yin and yang that life is made of. As one of my favorite hymns puts it "It is right, it should be so, we were made for joy and woe, and when this we rightly know, safely through the world we go".

And safely through the world, our congregation indeed continues to go. As we begin another of the many "Goodbye/Hello" summers we have spent together, I want to offer my perspective from having been with you through all of the coming and going over the past two decades.

I tell every new minister I welcome to First Universalist how incredibly lucky they are. First Universalist is a minister's dream. Our congregation "checks all the boxes"—a kind, caring, generous group of mature, thoughtful, hardworking, and realistic people. All of the transitions we've navigated have created a congregation that fully functions; one in which the members understand that they are ultimately responsible for what does and doesn't happen. As we process another goodbye, and prepare for another hello, I promise that because of who we are, safely through the world we will continue to go.

Gratefully,

Peter House ❖



# A Caring Team, a Family's Gratitude

*Submitted by Ann Rhody*

Throughout my many years as a member of this church, my main areas of involvement have been worship services, music, and finance. But I realize how many folks are involved in other important ministries within our congregation: social justice, building, coffee hour, education, and caring, to name a few.

CARING. I've always known these people were wonderful, but I recently got the chance to experience just HOW wonderful, as we held the Celebration of Life for my sister, Eileen Musson. Mind you, this was a beautiful June Saturday afternoon, and ours was the second Memorial Service that day. Lots of volunteers were needed, and they showed up—as Caring Committee, ushers, and greeters. As my family and I arrived with our supplies and were getting all in place for the service, this tireless team was cleaning up from the Doughty family's reception and continuing to offer care and comfort to those in need.



The service was beautiful, and this wonderful team had everything ready to go for a lovely reception in the lounge—snacks, drinks, chairs set up for people to chat and circulate. They worked to keep things refilled and were so kind and accommodating to our family.

The Caring Committee SHOWS UP in times of need, with just the right touch, to remind us that we are held in love by this congregation. Thank you to co-chairs Heather Jones and Susan Reedy for the way you live out our mission to *Nurture the Spirit and Serve the Community*.

I'm sure that Heather and Susan would welcome new Caring Committee members! Please reach out if you'd like to participate in this important ministry. ✦



## Rochester Pride Parade: Join us on July 19!

*Submitted by Kitty Forbush*

Come one, come all to the 2025 Rochester Pride Parade on Saturday, July 19, starting at 11am! The parade will begin at the intersection of South Avenue and Science Parkway and will travel north on South Avenue to the festival at Highland Park.

First Universalist will have signup sheets in the Clara Barton Lounge on Sundays during July—you can be a watcher (cheerer on) or a marcher. If you sign up, you get a free FIAC pen! Save the date—it is so much fun and a wonderful way to support Rochester's LGBTQIA2S+ community! ✦



## Calling All Musicians!

*Submitted by Ann Rhody*

The music for summer services will be provided by our talented members and friends! As of this writing, we still have some dates available if you have something you'd like to play or sing. It's a great way to get involved and be part of the magic we create in worship services. Please connect with Ann Rhody at [summermusic@uuroc.org](mailto:summermusic@uuroc.org) to express interest or get scheduled! ✦





# Drop-In Discussion

*Submitted by John Lukes*

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 for in-person discussions. Contact [DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org](mailto:DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org) for the link, or look on [uuroc.org](http://uuroc.org)!

## **Sunday, July 6 | Time Travel \*In-person\***

If you could go back to a specific time and interact with the people of the time, when and where would that be? What would be your goal? What would you hope to experience? David Damico facilitates in the present. All are welcome. We meet at 9:15am the first Sunday of the month in the Chalice Room.

## **July 1 | Open Topic**

Tonight we'll discuss whatever is on our minds lately, with the challenges facing us all, and to continue our discussion around suggestions for upcoming topics and presenters. All are welcome!

## **July 8 | "Why We Call This Faith" (1 of 3)**

Tonight we will watch and discuss the first of three sermons that Rev. Bill Sinkford presented as the Sabbatical Minister at First Unitarian. He explains the UU faith in ways both intriguing and challenging.

## **July 15 | "The View From The Mountaintop" (2 of 3)**

"We drink from wells we did not dig and warm ourselves at fires we did not kindle. What strength can we draw from the past as we work toward our vision for the future? The church is a community of both memory and hope." These words by Rev. Sinkford preface his mountain-top vision of how our past and our future are interconnected.

## **July 22 | "And Now For The Good News" (3 of 3)**

Rev. Bill wraps up with final words of encouragement and support to all who participate in the Unitarian Universalist faith tradition.

## **July 29 | Rev. Kirby Hensley: Con Man or Reformer ?**

Rev. Kirby Hensley founded and led Universal Life Church, which offered mail-order ordinations coupled with an all-inclusive creed: "Universal Life". Was this a purposeful challenge to what is considered a legitimate church — or a con? Let's discuss what may apply to our experiences in faith communities. John Lukes will present and moderate.

Have a topic for us? Contact our team with your proposal at [DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org](mailto:DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org). ❖



## **First Universalist Tech Team: Wanna Join Us?**

*Submitted by Charlie Courtsal, Tech Team Manager*

Summer is a good time to explore new interests! Would you be interested in learning more about serving on our Tech Team? We would like a few more volunteers to help run the audio and the Zoom services when Oliver (our brilliant tech person) is away. You would be trained by experienced folks and support the important work of including our online community in the Sunday services.

We would also like a few more volunteers to serve as Greeters and Ushers (known as "Grushers") for the Zoom service, and online Coffee Hour Hosts after the service. You don't have to be a "tech whiz" to be a Grusher or Coffee Hour Host; just be able to access the Zoom service on a laptop or desktop computer. You would be trained by experienced folks to serve our growing online community.

If this is something you would like to explore, please send us a note at [tech@uuroc.org](mailto:tech@uuroc.org). We look forward to talking with you! ❖

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## **Stewardship: Come, Come, Whoever You Are!**

*Submitted by Ann Rhody & Howard Spindler,  
2025 Stewardship co-chairs*

Stewardship 2025 is behind us, but you are always welcome to make a financial commitment to First Universalist! Pledge cards are available at church or on our website, [uuroc.org](http://uuroc.org).

As of this writing, we are still working to get two more pledges to reach our 100 pledge threshold by June 30. Watch for an announcement if we make that goal! Thanks to everyone who pledged and helped with this year's stewardship campaign. ❖



## July Social Justice Plate: 490 Farmers

Our July Social Justice Plate Offering is designated for 490 Farmers and will be collected on July 20.

490 Farmers seeks to learn alongside Rochester residents and youth to build community, hold land in common, and foster food sovereignty through urban agriculture. Guided by principles of mutual aid, they aim to steward a space where all feel welcome and integral to this mission, pushing our city toward a more resilient and equitable future.

Please contribute to support this important work. For more info, visit their website, [490farmers.org](http://490farmers.org). ❖

## Finance: Pledge Payment via Automatic Debit (rerun!)

*Submitted by Brian Mumey, Finance Chair*

Hello everyone! Hope you have a wonderful summer. Remember when summer TV was all reruns? In the dark ages, before streaming. Well, our summer *Outlook* article is a rerun. I thought it was fitting because our automatic debit program kicks off the same day this *Outlook* will be published, July 1. Here ya go.....

Are you tired of writing a check every month to pay your pledge? Or maybe you're tired of forgetting to write your pledge payment check? Do you want better control of when funds will be pulled from your bank account than your bank's Bill Pay allows? We have a solution for all of these issues: Automatic Debit.

First Universalist is now able to set up recurring transactions to automatically debit your checking

account every month. Set it up once and the transactions will occur on the first day of every month at the amount you specify. You can change the amount or cancel your automatic debit at any time.

If you are interested in subscribing to automatic debit, please send an email to [finance@uuroc.org](mailto:finance@uuroc.org). We will send you the required form.

Please note the following:

- Automated debit processing will begin July 1, 2025, or the first of the month following submission of the form.
- You can submit the form by mailing it to: Finance Chair, First Universalist Church of Rochester, 150 S. Clinton Ave, Rochester, NY 14604, by dropping it in the collection plate on Sunday or by scanning the form to a PDF and emailing it to [finance@uuroc.org](mailto:finance@uuroc.org). Don't forget to include a voided check (scanned if submitting via email).
- Your account will be debited the first of the month unless the first occurs on a holiday or weekend. In those cases, the debit will occur the next business day.
- To cancel or change the amount of your automatic debit, please email [finance@uuroc.org](mailto:finance@uuroc.org). We will make every attempt to process your request prior to the first of the next month though this cannot be guaranteed.

If you have any questions about this, or anything else, please email [finance@uuroc.org](mailto:finance@uuroc.org). ❖





## These Worship Times, They Aren't A-Changin'

While many changes are inevitable, and perhaps a defining characteristic of these times that are driving people to church as a place of refuge, we don't want confusion about our worship start time to be one of them.

So tell your neighbor. Tell your companion in the pew. Never have that time change conversation again. **Worship at First Universalist Rochester starts at 10:30am on Sundays ALL YEAR ROUND! ❖**



## Animal Ministry: *Join Us!*

*Submitted by Lois Baum, Leader Animal Ministry Social Justice Circle*

Come along with us this summer when Animal Ministry visits nearby animal sanctuaries ... Savannah Pig Rescue, located in Wayne County, with snuggly pot belly pigs and rescued farmed pigs. Mockingbird Sanctuary, in Byron, just east of Batavia, which recently rescued a now-three-legged, peppy black lamb named Radley. ASHA Farm Sanctuary, located in Newfane, where Albert the Cow was once kissed by our own Kitty Forbush! And Odonata Sanctuary in Honeoye Falls, with birdwatching and a dragonfly trail. Let's plan!

Animal Ministry would love to have you join us as we dine out at any of a growing number of local all-vegan restaurants (New Ethic Pizza, Hollycake House, Natural Oasis, Vegan Butcher, Eden Café, and Red Fern). And all are welcome as the Rochester Area Vegan Society (RAVS) continues hosting their monthly all-vegan potlucks, including the summer picnic on July 20 ([rochesterveg.org](http://rochesterveg.org)).

VEGFEST: Sunday, August 24, a festival where our new member, Adam Durand, will be the Keynote Speaker! "Compassion in Action: Eat Plants! Save the Planet!" is the theme, from 10am-4pm, at Parcel 5, FREE ([rocvegfestny.org](http://rocvegfestny.org)). Don't miss it!

Did you know that within UUA is a national group focusing on animals? There are many local Unitarian Universalist Animal Ministry (UUAM) chapters in cities across the USA and Canada. Its leaders Zoom monthly to share ways to include and educate our individual congregations about animal concerns. Rochester's own Animal Ministry Social Justice Circle was formed in 2010 (by me) as a local chapter of the national [UUAM.org](http://UUAM.org).

UURoc's Animal Ministry Zooms monthly. We focus on animal sentience, as we strive to become more aware of our own complicity in human dominion over nonhumans. We review all animal issues from veganism to vivisection, puppy mills, feral cats, breeding vs. adopting, etc. We discuss compassionate choices as we understand that peace begins on our plate.

Through the years, our Animal Ministry Social Justice Circle planned and hosted two church services, "Celebration of the Animals", inviting everyone to share personal stories by bringing photos (not animals) to church. We have also worked alongside our EcoJustice Social Justice Circle, reviewing the relationship between environment and agribusiness, and how eating animals affects the climate.

This year, our Animal Ministry may also start a book club, join local advocates educating outside of church, and we'll join together to feed Rochester's homeless folks with a vegan meal. Interested?

While members of Animal Ministry are not required to be vegan, we embrace the Vegan Ethic: to not support or participate in that which exploits nonhuman beings, humans, or the environment.

We would love to have you join us for any or all of our activities ... For the Animals. ❖



# Membership Committee

*Submitted by Donna Anderson, Membership Chair*

Hello everyone! In this edition of our *Outlook* Michael Scott has written an article to introduce himself as Board President this coming church year.

“Greetings, First Universalist! I am delighted to have the chance to share a bit of my story and to thank you all for putting your trust in me as our next congregational president.

I have a long family history on the Universalist side of our heritage. My grandmother’s great-grandparents were among the founders of Liberty Universalist Church in Camp Hill, Alabama, and I am the son, grandson, and (soon to be) father of UU ministers. I grew up in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Kentucky, and Wisconsin. As an adult, I was active in churches in Madison and Milwaukee before moving to Rochester with my wife, Kelly, and joining this church in 1985. I’ve been a Computer Science professor at the U of R for 40 years at this point—8 of those as department chair. A decade ago, I spent a year on sabbatical at Google. I plan to retire about a year from now.

In our church, I’ve been active in the choir, the House (building) Committee, the tech for our online services, as a Worship Associate, the Committee on Ministry, the Ministerial Search Committee that recruited Rev. Sally Hamlin 20 years ago, denominational affairs, and the Board. I’ve been Secretary three times in the past, but never President before. Through all this time, you folks have been my family—my tribe. You’ve helped Kelly and me to raise two wonderful children. You’ve helped me remember what matters in life.

While I never had the experience of rebelling against religious orthodoxy, I did go through a process of spiritual discernment as a teen, eventually deciding that—unlike my dad the minister—I was in fact a theist. I live in gratitude and awe for the amazing universe in which we find ourselves. To me, it feels miraculous and purposeful; I am happy to call its sense of purpose God.

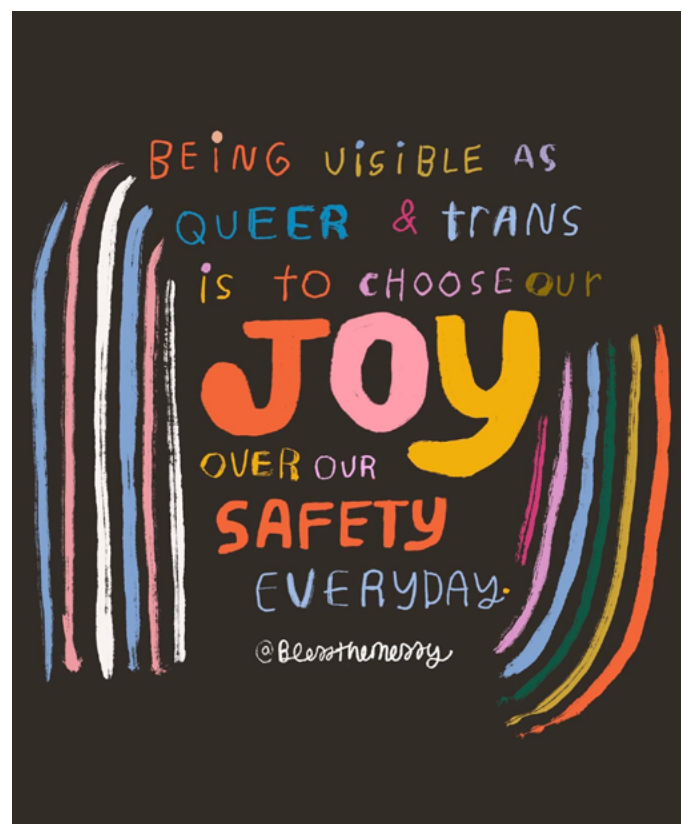
Like many of us, I think, I fear that civilization may be heading off a cliff. Somehow, we modern humans seem to

have lost our sense of mutual commitment. While we can blame many things—social media, the excesses of capitalism, right-wing disinformation, left-wing pursuit of individualism—I know this church’s values are essential to the solution. We need hope, joy, gratitude, purpose, and a shared commitment to each other and the planet. Like my predecessor, Clinton Swingle (big shoes to fill!), I believe our church must grow—not just to strengthen the institution itself (though I certainly value that) but to carry our message of Love, at the center of all things, to people who need its healing, and to the wider world.”

Michael Scott, *June 2025*

Thank you Michael for sharing with us! We look forward to your leadership in your tenure as president.

Justin, our Congregational Life Coordinator, has lots of ideas on how our church community can grow. Our committee looks forward to working with him this coming church year! We want YOUR ideas too! Reach out to us! We look forward to hearing from you! Happy summer, everyone! ✦





# 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.

**Summer Minister** | Peter House

**Minister of Lifespan Faith Dev.** |  
Rev. Michelle Yates

**Music Director** | Dr. Brock Tjosvold

**Office Manager** | Mx. Emma Barry

**Finance Admin** | Maresa Carmody

**Cong. Life Coordinator** | Justin Wilson

**Nursery Care Providers** |  
Carol Williams & Lily Thatcher

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

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2025–2026

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Adam Durand, & Clinton Swingle

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

More info is available on our website: [uuroc.org](https://uuroc.org)

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