



# Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY

September 2015

**Summer Minister**

Peter House  
phouse@wflboecs.org

**Minister**

Rev. Celie Katovitch  
minister@uuroc.org

**Director of Music**

music@uuroc.org

**Director of Life Span  
Faith Development**

Michelle Yates  
edu@uuroc.org

**Office Administrator**

585.546.2826  
office@uuroc.org

**Our Outlook**

**Newsletter Editor**

David Damico  
uurocnews@gmail.com

**First Universalist Church**

150 South Clinton Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14604

**Visit us online** [www.uuroc.org](http://www.uuroc.org)

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## Sunday Services | September 2015

**September 6 | *Keep Holy the Sabbath***

As we prepare for the Fall, we will look ahead to "Black Friday" - A Labor Day sermon about the need for "down time" and the price we ALL pay because it has all but vanished.

- Peter House (Summer minister)

Summer service begins at 10am



**September 13 | *Ingathering***

Today we celebrate the start of the main church year and the promise of religious community. Come to share in our ritual gathering of the waters of summer, and to hear the tale of 'Old Turtle and the Broken Truth,' in this service for all ages.

-Rev. Celie Katovitch



**September 21 | *We Begin Again in Love***

The High Holy Days inspire us to contemplate forgiveness and redemption. The world's wisdom traditions speak of these things as integral parts of the spiritual life, yet for many of us, they are among its more challenging aspects.

-Rev. Celie Katovitch



**September 28 | *One Light, Many Windows***

This is a time-honored description of Unitarian Universalist theology. Yet in the back of our minds, we may wonder occasionally: how can this theological diversity thing really work?

-Rev. Celie Katovitch



Regular service begins at 10:30am





## Pastor's Perspective

Message from Rev. Celie Katovitch

As we begin a new year together, I'd like to share a beautiful "tall tale" I learned this summer in Ireland. (You may be hearing a few Irish stories this fall-- thank you for humoring me!) It's a story of Saint Kevin, a beloved character who lived between 400 and 600 A.D.

According to legend, at the age of seven Saint Kevin went out into the meadows to pray. As he was standing in quiet meditation, eyes closed, arms outstretched, a blackbird -- a creature often seen as a messenger of the sacred-- landed in one of his palms. Saint Kevin slowly opened one eye and, noticing his companion, knew that he must continue to hold a stillness, until the bird left its perch. Several minutes went by, and Kevin, slowly opening his eyes again, saw that the bird was, twig by twig, assembling a nest there in his hand. Now, he knew, he must continue in his posture of prayer until the nest was built. More time passed. Surfacing from his practice again, Kevin noted that the bird had laid her eggs in the nest. His heart went out to this small creature, and he knew he must remain in meditation until the eggs were safely hatched. And thus a longer stretch of time passed. Day faded into night, and a new day dawned; soon day became days, then a week, and still Kevin continued in diligent meditation. (In the interval, it's said, the nesting bird kindly returned with nuts and berries, which it fed the good saint from time to time.) One day, Kevin surfaced from his stillness to the sound of chirping hatchlings; but, he noted, the young blackbirds had not yet learned how to fly. So great was his compassion for the creatures that he decided he must continue to hold an open hand until the mother had taught the fledglings how to take to the air. This he faithfully did, immortalizing himself in lore and literature as a lion of spiritual practice, and as one who exemplified the urgency, patience, and lovingkindness of the spiritual life.

May we be inspired to live our own spiritual lives with purpose and devotion, meeting everyone that comes our way with an open hand, and an open heart.

In faith, --Celie ❖



St. Kevin and the Blackbird  
Hiberniae, England, c.1196-c.1223

## Minister's Schedule

**Sunday** (when preaching):  
office hours 12-1:00, at the church

**Monday:** day off

**Tuesday and Wednesday:**  
office hours vary based on meetings; the best way to ensure connecting is always by setting up an appointment.

**Thursday:** office hours 1:30 - 2:30 at Java's Coffee on Gibbs St., and by appointment.

**Friday:** devoted primarily to sermon-writing

\*\*As a personal spiritual discipline, I hope to adopt a practice of answering e-mails for a maximum of 1-2 hours per day, meaning that my reply may not be same-day in all instances. In the case of a concern that is time-sensitive, please do not hesitate to call. If you have a pastoral emergency, *please* call my cell (315-877-3302) at any time.

With gratitude, ~CK ❖

## Ingathering

We will celebrate being together again after summer sojourns with the traditional UU ritual of water communion. On Sunday, September 13th, all are invited to bring a small amount of water to worship, representing the spirit of your summer. Whether with contributions from a faraway lake, a local stream, a backyard pool, or the tap at "home sweet home," all are welcome! ❖



## Walking Together:

Director of Life Span Faith Development

*Submitted by Michelle Yates, DRE*

I was recently struck by a blog entitled “Why would I join a church where that happens?” by Presbyterian minister Joshua Bower. Rev. Bower gives a powerful example of a bad “church-minister break up,” and goes on to reflect on personal examples of what drives or keeps people away from churches.

We’ve all had those moments, times of disappointment, disillusionment and shame over events or circumstances in a community, a church, our family, or ourselves.

As Bower says, “The Church [just like the rest of the world] is a messy place full of beautiful, complicated and [imperfect] people.”

On the verge of a new church year and the Jewish High Holy Days, it is a good time to consider the meaning of **hospitality** and how we can commit to it.

What is it that brought, and welcomed you to our church community? How can you support that or pass it on to others?

Is there anything you see as being unwelcoming; an area for growth and development? Consider how you can connect with others to have a positive conversation about how we might grow in this area, and how you can help.

Rev. Joshua Bower talks about joining the church because he knows that he too is imperfect, but also knows he has gifts to offer. He knows that there is something powerful and sacred in sharing our gifts and working together.

May we remember to be hospitable to and forgiving of ourselves, that we may better offer our gifts to each other. Let moments of disappointment motivate us to commit ourselves to transformation from the inside out, in ourselves, in our church community, and in our world.

***Happy Trails!!***

~Michelle ❖

# Adult Religious Education

## UU History Part 1: from Jesus to the Protestant Reformation

(It’s much more interesting than it sounds!)

**Wednesday, Sept. 23rd, 6:30–8:30pm**

We will be watching the first of six hour long videos produced by Ron Cordes for the series *Long Strange Trip: 2000 years of UU History*, followed by facilitated discussion and conversation.

Over the year, the other five parts will be offered. Feel free to come to one or all sessions as you can. Please RSVP so we can plan for enough space and seating to Michelle Yates at [edu@uuroc.org](mailto:edu@uuroc.org) or 585-310-2484.

Childcare available if requested. ❖

## A Note of Gratitude

Summer services just wouldn’t be the same without our great team of volunteer musicians!! Thanks to John Akers, Charles Courtsal, Ed Deller, Kitty Forbush, Nancy Gaede, Nancy Grear, Lisa Gwinner, Ann Rhody, Sarah Singal, Howard Spindler, Keith Stott, and Lew Ward Baker for providing music to feed our spirits during the summer. ❖

## From Your Finance Team

We are in search of a treasurer! A well-organized person who is highly committed to the congregation would be the best fit. Side-by-side training and coaching will be provided on an ongoing basis. If you would like more information or would like to recommend someone, please contact Finance Chair Ann Rhody at [annrhody@gmail.com](mailto:annrhody@gmail.com). ❖

# Living Our Values, Making A Difference

*Submitted by Newcomb Losh, Communications Committee*

On August 2nd, our members and friends contributed 50 packages of diapers and wipes in a Diaper Drive for Bethany House which depends entirely on donations to provide shelter for homeless women and children.



Drive organizer Lois Baum (l) and donation collector Eileen Fernandez (r) await last-minute drop-offs in the Clara Barton Lounge.

Greg Baum leads the way to Bethany House's door, followed by Lois Baum and Ed Deller.



Pictured l to r: John Morgan, Lois Baum, Ed Deller, Beverly Lynn, Bethany House Co-Director Donna Ecker and Greg Baum. Not pictured: Eileen Fernandez, diaper collector, and all of the donors who made this possible.



John Morgan and Beverly Lynn carry our donations.

All photos taken by Newcomb Losh



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## Backpacks 2015: Buyers needed!

*Submitted by Sarah Singal*

We have a backpack fund *full of money* that we now need to empty and produce backpacks for children of School 7 who might not be able to afford one. This yearly exercise is so appreciated by students, faculty and staff at School 7. Please bring one to 10 with you to church. There is no need to pay for them yourself; *save the receipts*. Please let Sarah Singal (ssingal@rochester.rr.com) know how many you bought and how much it was and she will help you fill out a green slip for direct reimbursement from the church. If you would also like to help with delivery to the school, please see Sarah, and if you would like to volunteer to tutor a student at School 7, please see Tim Mullins (tmullins1@rochester.rr.com). ❖

# RAIHN\* UpDates

Submitted by Marti Eggers



Eleven years ago this past April, RAIHN accepted its first guests. Since that time, RAIHN has helped over 330 families, well over 1,050 people, including 613 children, achieve sustainable independence. This is quite an accomplishment on the part of the families, the network directors and the over 1,700 volunteers who give of their time and hospitality to support this project.

You, too, can become part of this movement by attending a training session, then volunteering with others from First Universalist, St. Mary's, Aldersgate United Methodist Church of Greece and the Church of Love.

## Here are a few dates to remember –

**Next training session** – Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, from 10 until noon at the Quaker Meeting House, 84 Scio Street in downtown Rochester.

**Next Second Level Training Session** – Wednesday, November 4<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 – 8 pm at the First Presbyterian Church, 25 Church Street, Pittsford.

**Next Host Week at First Universalist** – September 13<sup>th</sup>– 20<sup>th</sup>.

Please consider giving a little of your time to our RAIHN families. They would be so grateful. ❖

\* RAIHN, the Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network, is a consortium of 14 faith communities that host families in temporary need of housing, and 27 faith communities that provide volunteers and other support to the host congregations. First Universalist is a host congregation, supported by St. Mary's, Aldersgate United Methodist Church of Greece and the Church of Love Faith Center. Four times a year, for a week each time, volunteers from these congregations work together to provide a welcoming, safe place for the families to come home to after a day at the RAIHN Center where they get help looking for housing and, for some, new employment. We prepare and serve a hot evening meal, help with homework, offer a lap, a story and a hug, a listening ear, a word of encouragement, overnight presence, breakfast and whatever else might be needed before the families return to their jobs or to the Center for another day of hard work.

# Musicians Network Conference

Submitted by Lewis Ward-Baker

My four July days in Boston attending the *Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network* Conference had many great moments, not the least of which was reconnecting with Reverend Mark Morrison-Reed, whom many will remember as co-minister of our church. He preached at the beautiful historic Arlington Street Church on the theme of which he is the denomination's expert, the history of African-American and other cultural influences (and the lack thereof) on the music we sing in worship each week. More than one hundred fifty of us sang on that Sunday morning, directed by an outstanding exponent of that repertoire, Canadian Brainerd Blyden-Taylor. He had rehearsed us each morning with great expertise and warm good humor. He's not a UU but he might as well be!

In a workshop session with Mark, I asked, "What about a white man singing a black man's song?" (Like me for instance.) I learned from his reply, and from the many other times we focused on that issue, that the crucial element is respect for the source. If we let the hearers know, through a note in the Bulletin or the spoken word, something about the origins of the words and music, honoring them in our hearts, all will be well.

New Harbor, Maine, August 12, 2015 ❖

## Book Club News

Submitted by Shirley Bond



The Book Club will meet again September 27<sup>th</sup>, noon, in the Adult Lounge.

We will be discussing: *Dreaming in Cuban* by Cristina Garcia, a remarkably colorful yet endearing novel set in Cuba and Brooklyn.

A good read for this time in History. Her story too! The book is short, lively, and informative. ❖

# Drop-In Discussion, September Schedule

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

Drop-in discussions are held each Sunday at 9:15 a.m. (except during the summer) in the adult lounge 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. Our last 11:15am summer discussion is on September 6, and our regular schedule of 9:30am resumes Sept. 13.

## September 6 | *Working America*

Phil Ebersole will make a presentation on American working people and labor unions, based on the ideas in labor lawyer Thomas Geoghegan's *Only One Thing Can Save Us*.

## September 13 | *Open Forum Discussion or to be announced.*

## September 20 | *#BlackLivesMatter*

The 2015 UU General Assembly passed a resolution supporting the #BlackLivesMatter movement. Click on <<https://www.uua.org/statements/support-black-lives-matter-movement>> to read it. Phil Ebersole will lead a discussion on what the #BlackLivesMatter movement is all about.

## September 27 | *Religion of the Future*

What would religion look like if it were consistent with science and sought a successful future for humankind? Hank Stone will open a grab bag of topics of discussion.

## October 4 | *Housing and Human Rights*

Please join philosopher and social justice activist George Payne for an interactive discussion on housing and human rights. Over the past ten years George has been involved with numerous anti-homelessness campaigns, including the Sanctuary Village movement in Rochester. He will discuss the difference between legal rights and moral rights, the need for governments to uphold the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, and creative ways to mobilize for housing rights in our community. All are welcome!  
<[www.gandhiearthkeepers.org](http://www.gandhiearthkeepers.org)>

If you have a topic you'd like discussed or, better still, would be willing to lead a discussion, speak to Phil Ebersole or David Damico. ❖

# The newest additions to the First Universalist Library

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

The First Universalist Church library is open for borrowing during coffee hour during the regular church year. Members and friends (those who've attended long enough to get a name tag) may borrow books for three weeks.

Books are arranged on the shelves in order of the Dewey decimal catalog numbers. Here are our newest additions.

*Nanoman: A Novel About Bad Chemistry* by Heather Menzies Jones (FIC)

*The Generosity Path: Finding the Richness in Giving* by Mark V. Ewert (177.7)

*The Sins of Scripture: Exposing the Bible's Texts of Hate to Reveal the God of Love* by John Shelby Spong (220.6)

*A Long Time Blooming: Meditations* by Marta Valentin (242)

*Including People With Disabilities in Faith Communities: A Guide for Service Providers, Families and Congregations* by Erik W. Carter (259)

*Amazing Gifts: Stories of Faith, Disability and Inclusion* by Mark J. Pinsky (259)

*Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality* by Thomas E. Reynolds (261.8)

*Reclaiming Prophetic Witness: Liberal Religion in the Public Square* by Paul Rasor (261.7)

*A Disability History of the United States* by Kim Nielsen (362)

*Far From the Tree: Parents, Children and the Search for Identity* by Andrew Solomon (362)

*The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* by Jeanne Theoharis (921) ❖



# House News, September 2015

*Submitted by Tom Ruganis*

September is almost here, and I had a hard time believing it was August! And with fall approaching it is time to plan our Fall Clean-Up day. We have tentatively scheduled this for October 17<sup>th</sup>. Please save the date and consider helping to get our beautiful building polished up and ready for winter.

## Here are some other highlights of the building related activities.

- The contract with Waste Management ended about six weeks ahead of schedule. We now have refuse and recycle collection services provided by the City of Rochester. There are two half cubic yard totes at the end of our parking lot. Collection will be every Tuesday (or Wednesday if Monday is a holiday). Nothing needs to be done for the totes but the recycle boxes need to be out before 6:30 am on collection day, meaning that they should be put out on Mondays. This will result in a savings of \$1750 per year based on current rates!
- The House Committee continues to work with the communications committee on new signage.

A meeting with a sign supplier will occur during the last week of August.

- The project to spruce up the second and third floor classroom hallways has begun. A new coat of paint will be applied in preparation for possible wall murals. We will try to schedule the work early in the week to minimize the odors on Sundays.
- The almost new computer donated by John Lukes has been installed in the Lifespan Faith Development (RE) office.
- Our LULA (Limited Use, Limited Access) elevator has successfully passed its six month inspection.

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 House Committee know. The Committee is currently: Tom Ruganis, Chair (tom@ruganis.net), Sarah Singal, Mary Vyverberg, Karen Dau, Marcy Klein, and Mike VanArsdale and Ed Deller. We'd love to hear from you! ❖

## Library News

*Submitted by Keith Stott*

### Triple Blessed

What impressed you most during your first visit to our church – the building, the music, the religion, the people? Newcomers sometimes ask questions about us during coffee hour and often they are shown a copy of *Reaching for the Infinite*, a book we published in 1983 to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our current church building.

Chapter 1 “Universalism, a Faith that Bids Us Climb” was written by then minister Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed. Chapter 2 “The Larger Body: Claude Bragdon and the First Universalist Church of Rochester” was written about our architect by H. Keith Stott. Chapter 3 “Robert Hope Jones: Shadow in the Organ Loft” was written by Dr. Roland Bramlet about the designer of our organ.

For an enlightening read about how we got to be who and where we are, read *Reaching for the Infinite*. Call number is **289.1 U**. ❖

## Garden Growth

*Submitted by Sarah Singal*

Thanks to our waterers and Thursday morning weeders!

This is our first full year and we are excited to have a second year to do things differently. Two of our challenges: one is poison ivy, particularly in the flower garden. If you venture in there, remember “Leaves of three—let it be!” Another challenge is to get church members, friends, as well as complete strangers to take things from the veggie garden. We hope to have a chalk board installed soon with a listing of what is ready to eat. We have grown at least a little of the following: green beans, strawberries, chives, radishes, Swiss chard, cucumber, nasturtiums and parsley. Some egg plants and carrots are ripening. A bumper crop of cherry tomatoes are spilling over all the raised beds! Pick some when they are ripe or we will have no room for any other veggies next year! See if you can find any butterflies on our milkweed flourishing in the flower garden. If you see a monarch, let us all know!

Please consider helping cut back our garden as the weather gets colder. It is too much work for just a few folks. We'll probably have several dates in November for putting the garden to bed. To get on the email list send your contact info to [ssingal@rochester.rr.com](mailto:ssingal@rochester.rr.com). ❖

## **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.

## **Summer Worship service begins at 10:00am Sundays**

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**Summer Minister** | Peter House

**Director of Life Span Faith Development** | Michelle Yates

**Music Director** | To Be Announced

**Sexton** | Brandon Fagan

**Nursery Care Provider** | Carol Williams

**Office Administrator** | To Be Announced

*Office hours, Tuesday through Friday, 8:30am–2:45pm. Telephone 585.546.2826*

## **Board Of Trustees 2015–2016**

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Ed Deller (President), Nancy Gaede ( Vice-president), Karen Ruganis (Clerk), Michael VanArsdale, Janet Rothbeind, Kitty Forbush, Tim Mullins, Rev. Celie Katovitch (ex-officio)

Editor, *This Week at First Universalist* (digital): TBA; Monthly newsletter *Our Outlook*,

David Damico/Marcy Klein

More information is available on our website: <http://uuroc.org>.