



Our Outlook

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First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY

November 2015

Sunday Services | November 2015

November 1 | *Good Heavens*

“Heaven” was once central to Universalist theology, but that emphasis quickly shifted to a focus on this life. On this Day of the Dead, we will consider what traditions that embrace this or similar holidays might have to teach us-- about the idea of an afterlife, and about our life now.

- Celie Katovitch

November 8 | *We Interrupt This Programming*

A consideration of interruptions, detours, wrong turns, and-- as Kurt Vonnegut put it-- “peculiar travel suggestions” in the spiritual life.

- Celie Katovitch

November 15 | *Of Freebies and Freedoms*

Last year, a bizarre musical controversy involving the band U2 caught the world’s attention. It prompted me to reflect on our UU 7 Principles, and some of the creative tensions among them.

- Celie Katovitch

November 22 | *“O We Give Thanks.”*

Our annual Thanksgiving service of story and song. We’ll give thanks for the gifts we have received and the gifts we are able to share. Children are welcome to join us for the full service; childcare will also be provided.

- Celie Katovitch

“This year’s Rochester **Union Thanksgiving Service** will be held at Temple Sinai, 363 Penfield Road, at 11:00 on Thanksgiving Day. Rev. Celie will preach the sermon. The service is a tradition dating back more than 140 years, and is the longest-running interfaith collaboration of its kind in the country.”

November 29 | *Gratitude*

We have so much to be grateful for especially at this time of the year. Join with your Worship Associates in a service of praise and thanksgiving for family, friends and community.

Regular service begins at 10:30am





Pastor's Perspective

Message from Rev. Celie Katovitch

I suppose that each of us has had a few occasions to speak that cherished expression of frustration: “thanks a million.” I picture it being accompanied by a roll of the eyes. It’s what we say when someone has put upon us a task we definitely did NOT want. If someone told you that you’d won a grand prize vacation to Siberia, this might be how you would respond. “Thanks a million!”-- meaning: “thanks for nothing!”

During my Ireland travels this summer, I discovered this was a frequently-used phrase among my Irish acquaintances also-- but that it cropped up in entirely different context. A bartender brewed one of my friends a cup of tea, and the friend replied, brightly, “Thanks a million, mate.” Taken aback, I replayed their previous interaction in my mind, wondering if the bartender had caused some irritation to merit this sarcastic rejoinder. But he too smiled brightly and went about his duties. He seemed to have taken no offense at the reply. Throughout the rest of the week, over and over again the group I traveled with was offered generous hospitality, and over and over again our Irish guides floated this phrase to those who hosted us. For hot tea and scones, for shelter from rainy afternoons, for rich conversation, for stories and jokes... “thanks a million.”

It had gotten turned around-- or perhaps, turned back around to its rightful connotation, would be another way to look at it. When the Irish say “thanks a million,” they mean it. It is an expression of abundant gratitude, always spoken with deep sincerity. I will never hear that idiom in quite the same way again.

How good to remember that we do, indeed, have a million things to be thankful for: blessings large and small, obvious and hidden; gifts we know we have been fortunate to receive, and gifts we take for granted because they are the most foundational things in our lives-- friends who welcome us, companionship to share, enough to eat, a place to sleep, songs to sing, and the power of speech to voice praise for this world.

I like to think we all might have a chance to know such effusive thankfulness. Not perfunctory thanks, but gratitude overflowing. Thanks a million. In faith, -Celie ❖

Congratulations Michelle Yates

Congratulations to Michelle George Yates our Director of Lifespan Faith Development!

Michelle will be ordained as a Unitarian Universalist minister on November 1st at 5pm at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst (her home church).

All are welcome to attend, but please RSVP to Karen Kuhn kkuhn745@gmail.com ❖

Compassion Meditation Group

This informal exploration of compassion through meditation and other UU spiritual practices will be held for three Wednesdays leading up to the holidays-- November 11th, November 18th, and November 25th, at 5:00, in the Sanctuary. No RSVP required, but you are welcome to e-mail Rev. Celie to let her know you'll be coming. No prior meditation experience required. ❖

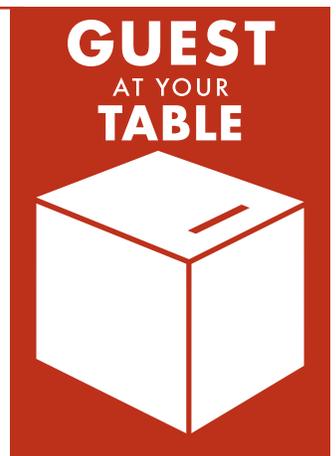
Submitted by Michelle Yates

For our Second Sunday Inter-generational Activity on November 8th we will be kicking off Guest at Your Table!

Guest at Your Table is an annual fundraising and education program that supports the human rights work of the UUSC (Unitarian Universalist Service Committee).

In this, the UUSC's 75th year, the program will be highlighting the empowerment of refugees and displaced people.

Our children will help hand out GAYT boxes, and UUSC video clips will be available to view after worship. ❖





Walking Together:

Director of Life Span Faith Development

Submitted by Michelle Yates, DRE

Wonder is the beginning of wisdom. **Socrates**

Many of us have heard of the Seven Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, but fewer of us have heard of, or explored the Six Sources. Like the Principles, these are not doctrine, dogma, or commandments. Given our diversity of beliefs, the Principles and Sources were collected from among our Association as points of covenant and agreement; Principles we aspire to and Sources we are inspired by. At our first Cozy Supper this year (Friday, November 27th 5:30-7:30pm) we will be considering the first source: "Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life."

For short, the "Mystery and Wonder" source. Let's embrace "Mystery and Wonder" as our Faith Development Theme in November.

Where do you find yourself in AWE? Wondering at something you don't know, or just the sheer awesomeness of something.

Perhaps listening to music, watching a sunset, looking through a microscope, marveling at a coincidence, feeling the warmth of the sun, or basking in the affection of another person....

This month look for moments where you experience a feeling of transcendent mystery and wonder. Stay with those moments for longer that you usually might. Don't rush onto the next thing, but really take it in. Allow these moments to renew your spirit. Feel into those deeper forces that create and uphold life. And take a moment to experience Gratitude; to say "thank you."

Here are some resources to get you started:

"Holy Now" a song by Peter Mayer
- there is a great visual meditation with this song by Christine Paintner on Youtube

Robin Ince's TED talk for science lovers- https://www.ted.com/talks/robin_ince_science_versus_wonder

Age of Miracles by Karen Thompson Walker, the Book Group is reading it this month & will meet to discuss on Sun, Nov. 29th @ 12noon

"We are an impossibility in an impossible universe."
— Ray Bradbury

"A [person] should hear a little music, read a little poetry, and see a fine picture every day of his life, in order that worldly cares may not obliterate the sense of the beautiful which God has implanted in the human soul."
— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

"The world is full of magic things, patiently waiting for our senses to grow sharper."
— W.B. Yeats

"To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour."
— William Blake, *Auguries of Innocence* ❖



Adult Religious Education

UU History

Meets the following Wednesdays from 6:30-8:30pm

Nov 4th- Part 3

American Unitarians: Organic & Imported

Dec 2nd- Part 4

Universalism: Murray to Ballou

Jan 20th- Part 5

The Road to Merger: Playing Well Together

We will be watching one of the 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.

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 or 585-310-2484.

Childcare available if requested a week in advance. ❖

Leadership Communications Feedback

At the Leadership Assembly, Communications Committee led a workshop, with the goal of helping us all to become more aware of how miscommunications happen, and how to prevent them from happening.

A list of actions and reminders were generated from participants' lively discussion. The Communications Committee reviewed and prioritized the list.

- **Have a physical calendar posted in lounge.** Melissa will print out the current calendar each Friday and display it on the Communication Committee section of the bulletin board in the Clara Barton Lounge.
- **Check the calendar on website right there at your committee meeting to make sure date is clear and send dates directly to Melissa.** Usually at least one person at committee meetings has a smart phone or other device that can do this easily. Placing this as an agenda item will help committee chairs to remember to do this.
- **Use an email group to share information.** Communications Committee has an idea that may be user-friendly for all. Stay tuned!
- **Inform the leaders by using the Committee Leadership list distributed by the Board as distribution list for information sharing.** Communications Committee placed a copy on the Clara Barton Lounge bulletin board and in the volunteer office.
- **List Leadership on the website.** This is a timely suggestion in that the Communications committee is in process of redesigning the website. This suggestion will certainly be added to the redesign.
- **Add Leadership role to nametags.** Communications Committee is working on this.

Reminders –

- Check the church calendar before scheduling a meeting.
- If the meeting is changed or cancelled, have it removed from the calendar.

- Do not forget about the many people in our congregation who do not use email. In the spirit of inclusion, please phone them.

By practicing the above, we can help to reduce miscommunications, and continue to strengthen what binds us together as a nurturing, serving congregation. ❖



Fall Finance Notes

Submitted by Ann Rhody for the Finance Committee

- **Don't forget your change!** We'll be collecting your loose change in the Clara Barton lounge before and after the service on November 1 and 8. Our pooled change will help to support our church programs both within our walls and in the wider community.
- The 2014–15 Fiscal Year ended June 30 and the final figures are in: *we closed in the black* and managed to pay down a prior loan from our endowment as well! You can find details in the official Treasurer's report for the fiscal year, which also contains information about how we helped the community with our social justice plate offerings. Copies of the report will be available in the Clara Barton Lounge during November, or can be requested via email from Ann Rhody at annrhody@gmail.com
- 'Tis the season.... For our **Holiday Shoppe!** The shoppe will be "open" in the Clara Barton Lounge after the services each Sunday from November 22-December 20. We are seeking donations of small gift items, crafts, and baked goods. Please contact Paula Marchese (pmarchese@rochester.rr.com) to donate or if you have questions.
- And the last of our fundraising "trifecta," the **annual Service Auction**, has been scheduled for Sunday, February 7 after the service. Save the date and join in the fun! More details coming soon.

The Finance Committee welcomes new members or project volunteers! Whether you'd like to work on a one-time fundraiser, or join our committee to work on payroll or help advise on financial matters, we have a place for you. Please contact committee chair Ann Rhody at annrhody@gmail.com ❖

RAIHN Holiday Season 2015

Submitted by Marti Eggers



The holiday season is meant to be a time of peace and goodwill. However, for many of our RAIHN families, this time of year can be difficult as they struggle to stretch their budgets to provide gifts for their children. To help our graduate families, RAIHN is again coordinating our Adopt-a-Family program. With your help we hope to serve approximately 25 RAIHN graduate families and their children during the 2015 holiday season.

Sponsors – individuals, families or groups - are matched with a family and asked to shop for each family member based on the family needs-and-wishes list that will provide the age, gender and clothing sizes of each family member. Sponsors can indicate the size of the family they would like to adopt.

If you are unable to adopt a family but would still like to support RAIHN at the holidays, we would graciously accept contributions or gift cards for locations such as Walmart, Tops, Aldi, Price Rite, Sav-A-Lot, or various gas stations, or donations of bus tickets or cleaning supplies.

Deadlines: All gifts should be delivered to the RAIHN Day Center at 34 Meigs St. in Rochester no later than Monday, December 14th. If you choose to wrap the gifts, please indicate the family member's age and gender on a tag that is attached to the gift.

Note: All gifts will be anonymous and donors will not meet the children or families receiving the gifts.

To Sign Up: Call 506-9050 or contact Jen Canning (coordinator@rainh.org) via email. Sponsors are matched with families on a first-come, first-serve basis, so let us know early if you'd like to participate!

We express our sincerest gratitude for your interest in assisting families in need this holiday season!!

RAIHN is exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All donations are eligible for a tax deduction. ❖



Update from the Board

Submitted by Ed Deller

October was a busy month for the leadership at First Universalist with many positive activities.

Leadership Assembly

Thirty-three church leaders met on Saturday October 3 to address both operational and strategic issues for the church. Items addressed included better committee communications, church calendaring and a five year visioning process. Many inputs were collected from the group and will be the focus of board and communications committee activity in the coming months.

Landmark Society Tour

Our church participated in the tour hosted by the Landmark Society of Western New York on Oct 2-3. More than 750 visitors came through our doors to marvel at the warmth and beauty of the Bragdon design. Many asked about our faith and about the banners in our sanctuary. It was a great opportunity to share who we are. Special thanks go to Karen Dau, Michael Scott, Kitty Forbush, Nancy Gaede, Connie Valk and Tom Ruganis for supporting the tour.

NYSCU Annual Meeting

First Universalist was well represented at the Oct 23-24 New York State Convention of Universalists where our former minister Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed delivered the keynote. The delegates from our church were: Rev. Dick Gilbert, Karen Dau, Michael Scott, Bridget Watts and Dolores DaLomba.

Parking

At our request, the Rochester City Traffic Control Board agreed to allow Sunday parking for us on the east side of Clinton Avenue in the bus lane. Signage was to be changed in October. They were unwilling to allow use of the bike lane on Court Street.

Thank you, Ed ❖

Living Our Values, Making A Difference

Submitted by Newcomb Losh, Communications Committee

Our Church Historian **Karen Dau** (r) and **Kitty Forbush** (l), gesturing to the Sargent window) served as tour guides for 750 tourists in the Oct 3rd Landmark Society's "Inside Downtown Tour." Sharing our history supports the acceptance of one another.



750 tourists toured First Universalist Church in the Oct 3rd Landmark Society's "Inside Downtown Tour." Sharing our history supports the acceptance of one another.

Ann Rhody (l) and **Carol Xiong** (r) stand with Pope Francis (ctr, facsimile) after the "Standing with the Pope for Climate Justice: Interfaith Prayers for our Common Home" service on Sept 21st at St. Mary's Church. At the service, Carol provided music, Rev. Celie led a prayer and Ann talked of our 7th Principle, the interdependent web of which we all are a part, before singing *Blue Boat Home*.

Photo by Connie Valk.





On Oct 18th, **Kitty Forbush** and **Elizabeth Osta** (back row, 2nd and 3rd from left, with some of the 15 other attendees) led a discussion on the injustices of human trafficking based on the video *Not My Life* and distributed a list of 23 things we can do to stop human trafficking.

Photographs by Newcomb Losh

Pat Gallaher, a Monroe County Family Court Judge, spoke of the heart-breaking evidence of human trafficking that she sees in her courtroom. She urged us to action.



Cozy Night Supper

Share the Wonder

Submitted by Kathy Russell



“Share the Wonder” at our Friday, November 27th COZY NIGHT SUPPER. This program from 5:30 to 7:30 is the beginning of our exploration of the Unitarian Universalist 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 then focus on the first source, “direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life.”

Consider adding this to your Thanksgiving weekend plans and let us know of your ability to attend by signing up on the Religious Education Bulletin Board or by contacting Kathy Russell at krussel6@frontiernet.net. Your RSVP/sign up will allow us to prepare appropriately. Child-friendly activities exploring this source will be arranged if you make a request one week in advance.

And for those who like to plan ahead... Future Cozy Friday night supper dates exploring other sources are January 15th, February 26th and March 18th. ❖

Auld Lang Syne

Submitted by Karen Dau, archivist



John Winthrop Brigham, the 13th settled minister of this church, was a native of Concord, MA, born there on Nov. 26, 1914. He capped his professional education with a Doctor of Divinity from Meadville Lombard Theological School. Before coming to Rochester he had served congregations in Castine, Maine; Billerica, Massachusetts; and Sioux City, Iowa. Between 1959 and 1961 he served the American Unitarian Association as a field representative, and from then until March 1966 he was associate director of the Department of Ministry for the newly created Unitarian Universalist Association.

Dr. Brigham began his ministry in Rochester on April 1st, 1966. Soon after his arrival he and his wife Anna Louise Dege Brigham began canvassing the former residential streets where the Midtown Tower housing complex is now located. They were searching for families interested in attending the church and in bringing their children with them. For quite some time afterward the Brighams would arrive at church on Sundays in their large station wagon, bringing neighborhood residents with them.

In April of 1967 Brigham attended the annual stockholders' meeting in New Jersey of the Eastman Kodak Company, then the city's largest employer. There he presented a congregational resolution supporting Kodak management in its ongoing dispute with the Rochester antipoverty agency F.I.G.H.T. about the agency's demands related to employment, yet he also expressed distress based on the negation by Kodak "of the religious principle of integrity and respect for the dignity of persons."

At the same time, serious ongoing concerns of the congregation were demanding his attention. At its annual meeting in May of 1968, the congregation voted down the selection by its Site Committee of a lot on Kreag Road in Perinton for construction of a new church. The option of about \$25,000 was more than the congregation could manage. Decisions about moving or staying downtown had to be made all over again. In May 1970 the congregation voted 45-4 at its annual meeting to sell the church to the city as part of its Southeast Loop urban renewal project, considered by some to be "urban removal." However, in July that year

the U.S. Dep't. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) refused to approve a sale of the church to the city, claiming that it was not on the approved list of buildings to be acquired for the Southeast Loop project. A number of congregants were left financially and spiritually devastated by this decision. In January of 1971 the Times-Union newspaper featured a large article titled "Landmark Church on Death Row." Undoubtedly these were disheartening and distracting issues for Brigham, since at heart he was primarily a social justice minister.

After leaving Rochester in August of 1974 he jointly served the Unitarian Church of Quincy, Illinois, and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at Burlington, Iowa. Upon his retirement in 1982 both congregations named him minister emeritus. He passed away in Quincy, Illinois on Jan. 23, 2004 at age 89. His wife initially survived him but she is now deceased. He left behind three sons, six grandchildren, and ten great-grandchildren. ✦



News

Submitted by Keith Stott

Our Beginnings

How did our present-day faith assume such rapid growth in the nineteenth century? According to Ernest Cassara, author of *Hosea Ballou: The Challenge to Orthodoxy*, it was Ballou's "awareness that the power of love is not exclusively Christian lay the seeds of modern Universalism." For a revealing description of Ballou's life and work read his biography, recently donated to our library. Call number is **921 B**. ✦

Drop-In Discussion Schedule, Nov. 2015

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.

November 1 | *Our American Food*

Hal Bauer will discuss the effects of large scale, commodity agriculture on America's health and environment based on his experience in health research and organic farming and through Wenonah Hauter's work as executive director of Food and Water Watch and her book Foodopoly. Hal will show a 15 minute, animated, educational video at 9 a.m. for those who are willing to come early. FYI: www.TrueCostOfFood.org.

November 8 | *The Universalist Herald*

The Universalist Herald is the oldest continuously published liberal religious magazine in North America, devoted to a living religion and vital faith that motivates individual responsibility and positive action. Join us as we discuss how this publication promotes contemporary UU values while drawing on significant figures from our denominations history. David Damico will facilitate.

November 15 | *What Is Neo-Liberalism?*

Phil Ebersole will make a presentation about this influential way of thinking.

November 22 | *The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester*

Becky Elwell is president of the Interfaith Alliance of Rochester, an advocacy group that campaigns for social justice. In an op-ed article in the D&C recently <<http://tinyurl.com/nr8ktzc>>, she wrote about unjust treatment of children and the poor by our local government. She will lead a discussion on how we can do better.

November 29 | *Open Forum Discussion* led by Phil Ebersole

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

House News, Nov. 2015

Submitted by Tom Ruganis

Thanks to all of the eighteen that came to our church on Saturday October 17th. We were able to do a lot of cleaning, minor repairs and safety checks both inside and outside our building.

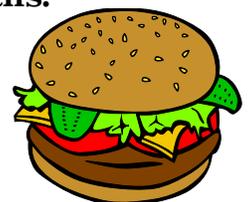
Here are some other highlights of the building related activities.

- The parking lot was sealed and re-stripped in late September. Hopefully the inconvenience was minor.
- The repairs to the steam line were completed in October. We are now back to a more comfortable environment.
- The House Committee continues to work with the communications committee on new signage. A proposal is expected in late October.
- We have started the transition to LED lighting in the Clara Barton Lounge. See if you can spot the two bulbs currently installed. More will be added as the old incandescent bulbs burn out or the price of LED drops to a better level. Now if we could only find LEDs for the Sanctuary!
- Two small plumbing leaks were fixed in the RE wing. A washer and a toilet valve were replaced.
- One of the three flat roofs has developed a small leak. We are currently investigating alternatives for repair and or replacement.

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, or join the House Committee, please let anyone on the 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 would love to hear from you! ❖

The
LUUnch
BUUnch
Nov. 2015

Burger Bar
Pittsford Plaza
Wegmans.



12:30 on Sunday, Nov. 22.

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

Minister | Rev. Celie Katovitch

Director of Life Span Faith Development | Michelle Yates

Music Director | Carol Xiong

Sexton | Brandon Fagan

Nursery Care Provider | Carol Williams

Office Administrator | Melissa Davies

Office hours, Monday – Friday, 9:30–2:30. Telephone 585.546.2826

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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>.