



# Our Outlook

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## Sunday Services | February 2019

### February 3 | *Legacies of Justice*

Martin Luther King Jr. told the Unitarian Universalist Association during his 1966 Ware Lecture, “Don’t sleep through the revolution!” These words have great meaning for our congregation today as well as for our denomination. In the age of Black Lives Matter, we are being called to wake up and to take action. This was the service intended for January 20 (when we had a snow cancellation), but do not worry—we won’t be missing out! Also this Sunday, First Universalist will commission our Affiliated Community Minister, Rev. Kelly Spahr.

— Rev. Lane Campbell

### February 10 | *Universalism in the Past*

Our month-long theme is Universalism and we will kick off a three-part sermon series by addressing the Universalism of our past. What is the religious tradition we come out of? How does our history inform who we are today?

— Rev. Lane Campbell

### February 17 | *Universalism in the Present*

In the second of a three-part sermon series on Universalism, we will explore what Universalism and universalism look like today, engaging writers and theologians both inside and outside of Unitarian Universalism. How has Universalism shifted in this post-modern time? This world is in deep need of a Universalism that can speak to today.

— Rev. Lane Campbell

### February 24 | *Universalism in the Future*

The final series in a three-part service series about Universalism: we will imagine what Universalism will look like in years to come and explore the future we are co-creating for this beloved faith. What will bring Universalism into the future? This will be worship for the whole church, so people of all ages are invited to participate!

— Rev. Lane Campbell and Rev. Michelle Yates

*All services begin at 10:30 am*



# Our Theological Roots

*Message from Rev. Lane*

It all started with a simple, heretical belief—the belief that all people (mostly all Christians) would be saved. Everybody would go to heaven. All people desired to be good. Some fell short. But the God we believed in was one whose expression was love. If the Prodigal Son returned and was embraced by his father, if the God we believed in was a loving parent, how could we believe in a God who would want to punish people? And how had a fear of God or a fear of hell ever been an honest motivator to live a good life? To fear God and the wrath of God inspired doing good out of a sense of guilt, out of a sense of having to do good rather than wanting to genuinely do good. Out of these beliefs, questions, and struggles came the tradition that is our heritage, our roots: Universalism.

What I love about this heritage is that we share it with so many different religious traditions. There are universalist Christians, for sure. But there are also uni-

versalist Muslims, Hindus, Jews, Buddhists, indigenous traditions, and on and on and on. We do not hold the sole claim to this faith, but at some point, we went from being lower-case U universalists to officially capitalized Universalists. The journey is fascinating and rich. The desire to live in the love of humanity and a higher power has always been there for humans. And the questions that come out of this love have guided how we live with one another for centuries.

So, this month, we strive to really explore the depths of Universalism to learn a bit about where we come from theologically. I've heard it said many times, "You can never know where you are going unless you know where you are coming from." And this is so true for us. I remember being raised in a Unitarian Universalist church from the time I was born and learning around age 14, finally, about our Unitarian and Universalist roots. I have to say I felt quite shocked and a little betrayed to learn we had come from heretical, Christian traditions. The Unitarian Universalist I had grown up with had been largely atheist and humanist, with very little talk about God and certainly never speaking about Jesus. So, this month, let's do a little exploring together—perhaps to feel a little shocked and hopefully to really begin to claim the roots of this beautiful faith out of which we have come. I am so excited to be on this journey with you all. ✚

## Social Justice Second Sunday: *Trans Panel with the Out Alliance*

Have you ever wondered about what it is like to identify as transgender? Wondering about what pronouns to use and how to interact with people whose gender you are unsure of? On Sunday, February 10, First Universalist will host a Trans Panel following the service at 12:00 pm in the Sanctuary. Our partner organization, the Out Alliance, will be bringing a small panel of folks in who identify as transgender, non-binary, and genderqueer. These awesome folks will be here to answer any questions, talk a bit about their journeys coming out as transgender, and to share the stories of their current lived experience. This panel is open to all and will serve as a great start to the conversation at First Universalist about how to be better welcoming to the transgender folks in our community who are seeking (and finding) a religious home. ✚

## Time to Bring Your "Guest at Your Table" Boxes

*Submitted by Rev. Michelle Yates*

Thank you for collecting funds for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) programs in the Guest at Your Table boxes over the holiday season!

Please bring in your contribution by **February 24** for the church to send in, or send your donation directly to the UUSC. Change, bills, boxes and checks (made out to First Universalist or UUSC) can be given to Rev. Michelle Yates, Bill Jones, or left in the Guest at Your Table box in the volunteer room. Please put coins in a bag as they tend to fall out of the boxes. ✚





## Walking Together

*Message from Rev. Michelle Yates,  
Director of Life Span Faith  
Development*

## Love and Grace

A mission statement is best when it is short, and easy to memorize and engage. For this reason, our Children’s Faith Development program has taken on the primary mission statement, “To share the Love and Grace of Unitarian Universalism.”

Like many of our principles, this mission leans heavily on our Universalist heritage. We want children and families who experience our program to feel safe, loved, and accepted; no matter who they are, no matter where they come from, no matter whom they love, no matter how life challenges them.

Some of you may have heard of Sophia Lyon Fahs. She is known as the “Great Grandmother of Liberal Religious Education.” She was an editor, author, teacher, and religious activist who led a revolution in Unitarian religious education. Fahs’ teaching and writing focused on a method of experiential learning that she hoped would enable children to develop their own ideas about religion and spirituality. This was completely different from the traditional classroom-memorization style of religious education in the early to mid-1900s.

Along with her worked Angus MacLean, a Universalist minister, theological school professor and dean, who played a major part in reshaping the philosophy and practice of religious education within the Universalist and Unitarian denominations during the 1930s, ’40s and ’50s.

Angus MacLean wrote an address in 1951 titled “The Method is the Message,” which asserts that *how* religion is taught is more important than *what* is taught. This piece continues to inspire and challenge me in my Faith Development work. That is not to say that we don’t value content, values and religious literacy in our programs. But I do recognize that a person is less likely to remember what I said, and more likely to remember how I made them *feel*.

We want our children and families, and everyone else in our congregation to experience of the Love and Grace of Unitarian Universalism and *feel* a sense of *belonging* and *welcome* in church service, in social hour, and in energized, accessible programming.

We can use your help to create this culture and build Beloved Community at our next **Family Night on Friday, February 22, from 6–8 pm.**

The church provides food, but we need helpers to pick it up, set it up in the Clara Barton Lounge, clean up afterward, support a family worship service, and help run preplanned activities with the kids. If you are available please contact me at [edu@uuroc.org](mailto:edu@uuroc.org), and we’ll figure out how you can help and join in the fun!!

Yours in Faith, Rev. Michelle ❖

## Spirit in Practice Faith Development Program

*Submitted by Rev. Michelle Yates*

The Spirit in Practice workshops were created to help UUs develop regular spiritual practices that help them connect with the sacred ground of their being, however they understand it. The workshops offer a forum for learning, sharing, and growth that can enrich our faith journeys.

Workshops will take place on the third Wednesday of each month from 6:30–8:30 pm (**NEW TIME**) in the Clara Barton Lounge, except for April, when we will meet on the second Wednesday, April 10. Come to each session or when you can.

In session 5 on Wednesday, February 20, we will consider Mind Practices: intellectual explorations as part of a fully rounded spirituality. We will also look at a model of six stages of spiritual growth. Please email our facilitator Rev. Michelle at [edu@uuroc.org](mailto:edu@uuroc.org) if you plan to attend or have questions. Walk-ins are also welcome.

The Spirit in Practice Workshops will also be offered every other Tuesday from 2–4 pm at the Irondequoit Public Library! The full schedule of dates for the ten sessions are as follows: January 15 and 29, February 12 and 26, March 12 and 26, April 9 and 23, and May 7 and 21. ❖

## Cozy Night Suppers

Submitted by Kathy Russell

Cozy Night Suppers will be held on **Friday, February 1**, and **Friday, March 8**, from 5:30 to 7:30 in the Clara Barton Lounge. Bring a dish to pass, noting ingredients for the dinner portion, from 5:30 to 6:30. This will be followed by the 6:30 program: *Possible All Church Systematic Racism Project Review* (presented by the Project Team February 1) and *A Different Look at Rochester* (presented by Roc/ACTS and Shirley Bond on March 8). Sign up on the bulletin boards in the hall or Clara Barton Lounge or let the office know you'll be joining us! The final Cozy Night Supper will be held on April 12 with a program by our EcoJustice Social Justice Circle. ❖

## Safety Planning

Submitted by Kate Fleury for the Safety Committee

We are meeting to plan a comprehensive approach to safety issues at First Universalist. If you become aware of any safety concerns, we would appreciate your input! We want to be as all-inclusive as possible in developing our goals. Please drop a line to Kate Fleury (collection point) at ekard2911@gmail.com with any ideas. Thank you! ❖

## House Committee Notes

Submitted by Tom Ruganis and Ed Deller

Two new signs were installed at the Clinton and Court Street corner entrance to better communicate the accessible entrance to the church.

As a reminder to anyone who wishes to have rooms heated for your meetings, please use the room reservation process on the church's web site and reserve the smallest space that you need so the heat demand is minimized. We use the church calendar as the main reference for programming the thermostats.

**HOLD THE DATE**—the annual Church Spring Cleanup is planned for Saturday, May 4, from 9 am to noon. All are welcome to help pitch in. ❖



## Drop-In Discussion Schedule

Submitted by Beth Ares

Drop-in discussions are held each Sunday morning in the Chalice Room on the second floor of our church, starting at 9:15 am during the regular church year.

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.

### February 3 | *“White Fragility” Part II: Why is it so difficult for white people to talk about racism?*

Join facilitators Shelley Adams and Elizabeth Osta as we continue to explore what makes discussing racism so difficult and what we can do to make it work! (See *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo, 2018)

### February 10 | *Teaching a Student with Disabilities*

My experiences in the last three years as a new high school teacher. Did you have difficulty in primary or secondary school from a health-related issue? How did you resolve it? David Damico facilitates.

### February 17 | *In the Wake of a Wave: Albany 2019*

Dick Gilbert, President of Interfaith Impact of New York State, will preview issues before the state legislature. There are unprecedented opportunities for passage of legislation many have sought for years: reproductive justice, environmental progress, voting reform, health care and others. How can we make a difference?

### February 24 | *“Water, water, everywhere... nor any drop to drink.”*

Think it's simple to dump your shower, dishpan, and laundry water somewhere besides right into the sewer? Well, not usually! Come hear some of the joys and concerns about handling **grey water** to conserve fresh water with Kate Fleury.

Do you have a topic for us—intellectual, profound, simple or silly? Please contact any of our team members with your Drop-In Discussion proposals: Shelley Adams, David Damico, Kate Fleury, Bob Remley, or Beth Ares, coordinator. ❖

# Finance News

*Submitted by Ann Rhody for the Finance Committee*

Once again, the generosity of this congregation was on display Christmas Eve: \$808 was collected for the Minister's Discretionary Fund. This fund enables our Minister to provide crucial help to those in need. Thank you!

Our Service Auction is scheduled for Sunday, February 3, right after the service! It's our biggest fund raiser of the year, and a treasured part of our congregational life. Please plan to attend and participate! Thanks to Paula Marchese and Katherine Flynn for co-chairing this year's event.

A friendly reminder: reimbursement requests are now handled online! If you have spent money on a RAIHN dinner, coffee hour food, or another church function, you can go to the church's web site, [uuroc.org](http://uuroc.org). Scroll to the bottom, and click the icon that says "members." You'll find a form to fill out to request reimbursement. If you need help with the process, contact

Treasurer Dick Shroyer ([treasurer@uuroc.org](mailto:treasurer@uuroc.org)) or Finance Chair Ann Rhody ([annrhody@gmail.com](mailto:annrhody@gmail.com)) and we'll walk you through it.

We are halfway through the fiscal year, and starting to plan for next year's budget! Now is the time to report areas of need, or suggestions for the budget, to your church leaders. You can ask a member of the finance team for details, or contact the appropriate committee chair.

Let's Show Up! Stewardship Sunday is March 31. See below for a message from the Stewardship co-chairs. More to come! ❖



## Eastman at Washington Square Concerts

Concerts are held at our church at lunch time on Thursdays. Each concert begins at 12:15 pm and ends at approximately 12:45 pm. Admission is free. Bring your brown bag lunch and enjoy.

- **February 7 | Unique Sound of Low Brass**  
"Brasso Profundo," a small ensemble of tubas and euphoniums, will play a variety of styles including pops, classical, jazz, and Broadway.
- **February 14 | Delighted Dueling Divas**  
Sopranos Cecile Saine and Sue Cotroneo and pianist Howard Spindler will fill your hearts with duets and songs of love for Valentine's Day.
- **February 21 | Pluck Pluck Pluck!**  
Enjoy Walton, Assad, Villa-Lobos, Rodrigo, and more classical guitar music performed by Kenneth Kam.
- **February 28 | Bach Meets Modern (I)**  
Students of professor Marina Lomazov perform a program that pairs Bach's works with piano works of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. ❖

## 2019 Stewardship News

*Submitted by Jillian Beaman and Richard Reed*

### *Let's Show Up!*

It's that time of year when we ask for your financial commitment to support our beloved church. This year's Stewardship theme involves each and everyone in the congregation. The ways in which we show up to support our church, how we show up to support and care for each other, and moreover, how we show up in our community to help make Rochester a better place to live.

Just prior to St. Patrick's Day you will be receiving your pledge information by mail. We ask that you look through it and either renew your financial commitment, or begin anew to support our programs, ministries and our mission here at First Universalist. Your pledge will support the 2019–2020 budget year.

We ask that your pledge card be returned by Stewardship Sunday, March 31. You can mail your pledge card in the enclosed envelope, drop it in the Sunday offering basket, put it in the receptacle in the hallway at church, or you can pledge online at [uuroc.org](http://uuroc.org).

It is our pleasure to serve as your Stewardship co-chairs and to be a part of this beloved community. If you should have any questions or you don't receive your pledge packet, please see either of us. ❖

# Living Our Values, Making a Difference

Submitted by *Newcomb Losh*



**HEALTHY SNACKS:** Juanita Ball (*center*) folds a listing of local meal programs for our Healthy Snack sets as Nancy Gaede (*right*) hands Walter Yates a healthy snack bar. We prepare and give these snack sets to those who come to our door seeking food.

► *Do you 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.losh@yahoo.com](mailto:jnewcomb.losh@yahoo.com). ❖*

## The Sacrament of Foot Washing

Submitted by *Kate Fleury*

Foot washing shows appreciation for another person, it is a sign of hospitality and humility. At House of Mercy, nurses show respect for homeless people by washing their feet in a foot bath with Epsom salts, drying their feet, applying Vaseline or lotion, and trimming toenails. The clients receive new or clean socks, and sometimes there are shoes that fit.

Some people cannot reach their feet, so would be unable to do this for themselves. Others are interested in doing their own care, but do not have the tools. In addition to socks and shoes, we would like to expand our program to provide nail clippers and pumice stones to each client, along with training in foot and nail care.

Please help us continue this important work. Donations of clean or new socks, shoes, Epsom salts, Vaseline or lotion, nail clippers, emery boards,

and pumice stones can be given to Kate Fleury.

Thank you for joining us in caring for these important people in our community. ❖



# Social Justice Plate

*Submitted by Shirley Bond for the Social Justice Plate Committee*

Our Social Justice Plate Offering for the month of February has been earmarked for the Eastern Service Workers Association (ESWA). This group works tirelessly to help low-income community workers regroup and reorganize. Training is done by seasoned leaders who volunteer their time.

It is interesting to note that by canvassing low-income areas, they have been able to have a larger voice. Working together works! ESWA has an 11-point self-help membership benefit program of food, clothing, legal advice and preventive medical care. This is geared to remove immediate hardships so concentration can be focused on life-changing goals.

Thank you for your November collection for Flower City Pickers. They sent us a very nice note and also made sure to ask me to thank the congregation. We collected almost \$300! I met them at an event over the holidays and you would have thought the check was for \$3,000 by their response.

The group Enough is Enough was grateful for our monetary donation and sent me a text message thanking First Universalist. We have not heard the last of that young fresh organization, I can tell you.

Thank you for all your support for the Social Justice Plate offering. It is gratefully received by the Rochester community. People are really starting to pay attention to the church on the corner of Clinton and Court! Becky Elwell and I are grateful for the support. ❖



*Submitted by Connie Valk for the Harvesting Justice Social Justice Circle*

A town hall event designed to garner support for the passage of the Farmworker Fair Labor Act will be held in our Sanctuary on February 10 from 2:00 to 4:00 pm.

As most farmworkers are people of color, racism has everything to do with the failure of New York State to include farmworkers in labor laws. This is yet another chance to break down the barriers of structural racism. ❖

# Roc/ACTS News

*Submitted by Shirley Bond*

Happy New Year. We are off to a running start. Let me count the ways!

Roc/ACTS is still deeply involved with the Police Accountability Board (PAB) Alliance, of which First Universalist is a member. I have been impressed with their organizing skills and their can-do attitude. They tend to avoid the negative and plow on through. One example is their belief that all faith organizations should get involved with the City Council public meetings to voice our position. They are young and fearless.

The Police Accountability Board Alliance strongly opposes the Mayor's proposal and finds it unacceptable. It undermines the work done by the PAB Alliance and the City Council. We need to draft an ordinance that includes the five pillars necessary to effectively ensure true accountability.

Roc/ACTS has a solid Criminal Justice Task Force Committee which is ably lead by Kathleen FitzPatrick. To start off the New Year we will continue to focus on the implementation of Raise the Age, continue to advocate for PAB, demand changes for solitary confinement, keep a keen eye on bail reform, and consider working on the school-to-prison pipeline.

That should keep us busy. I am finding this task force is extremely committed. My job, which I joyfully embraced, is to give a report to the Roc/ACTS board once a month about the Criminal Justice Task Forces progress. I can do that.

I plan to give a full report next month as to what the Education, Poverty and Jobs tasks forces are doing. I know they have big plans. We also have a Roc/ACTS Fact Finding Task Force in play with a retreat scheduled for late April or early May.

We are thrilled with our new organizer who met with Rev. Lane. Betty Hancock knows the ropes. She is intelligent, quick and a very able leader. We also hired a part time administrator, Joanne Ballie, who... drum roll... is also extremely knowledgeable about everything we need to know. Capable leaders... a New Year... continuing progress... a win-win for all.

Join a task force... We are making changes... Let's rock.

Stay tuned for big news next month! ❖

# Project Team Update

Submitted by Dolores Da Lomba

Welcome to a New Year. We enter this year with hope and enthusiasm for the mission of the church as we continue to nurture the spirit and serve the community. We have many congregants engaged in serving the community individually and in groups via various social justice activities and the Social Justice Circles. The Project Team is seeking to support a community organization focused on eliminating racism in which the entire congregation can play a supporting role in numerous ways.

Join us on February 1 at the Cozy Night Supper as we present for your consideration one exciting project that we are looking at as a possibility. Spiritus Christi Anti Racism Coalition (SPARC) is committed “to facing the impact of racism on our lives, with a deeper understanding of its destructive consequences for all people. Through education and action we work to dismantle the harmful privileged/oppressed standard of racism. By creating a true partnership through a social justice agenda we shape a beloved community and demand transformative change.”

SPARC is led by Reverend Myra Brown who says that, “Everybody has a role to play. We either stand to-

gether as a diverse community or we fall together.”

SPARC is planning a Civil Rights Historic Site in the Baden Street area and is working with a coalition of community groups, the city, and well known artists and planners. Come learn more about the project on February 1.

For those of you who are early risers, I highly recommend listening to “On Being,” a talk program hosted by Krista Tippett on public radio, WXXI at 7 am on Sunday mornings. If that time’s not convenient, you can always catch her program online. Ms. Tippett, a speaker at a former UUA convention, was awarded the National Humanities Medal by President Obama in 2014. She is also a recipient of the Peabody Award. Her focus is always on the search for enlightenment in these dark times.

The guest on January 13, Claudia Rankine, is a poet, essayist and playwright, who spoke of her most recent publication, *Citizen: An American Lyric*, a book-length poem about race and the imagination. It relates acts of everyday racism—remarks, glances, implied judgements that she and friends have experienced—not from racists, but from colleagues and friends—that testify to a way of life that has colored the thinking of good people in ways of which they are not aware. The book had been short-listed for the National Book Award. I look forward to reading it. I hope you will too. ❖

## The Key to Our FIAC Expansion: Collaboration

Submitted by Joy Leccese, Chair of FIAC, with Becky Elwell and Heather Jones

From the beginning of the Faith in Action Council (FIAC) we knew that we wanted to reach out to other organizations and religious groups who are engaged in social justice activities. It took a while to get our ducks in a row, but we are in action!

In February and March, we will be holding exploratory meetings with our sister congregations from Winton Road and Canandaigua. We’ll share who’s doing what



kind of projects, and where we might join forces to expand our reach and be more effective. FIAC and our ministers have already reached out to the clergy and other activists at those two churches, and they are excited to begin a new phase of collaboration for the work we’re all doing.

Stay tuned! Read the bulletin boards, the announcements, etc. And, get involved!

No matter how big or small an effort you make toward justice, it all matters, and it counts. FIAC members thank all of you—our Social Justice Circles, our Project Team Leader (Dolores Da Lomba) and all members of the Project Team for their diligence and commitment. And of course, we’re grateful for our fabulous ministers, Rev. Lane and Rev. Michelle! It’s an exciting new year! Join in. Participate! Collaborate! ❖



# “The Lake of Shining Waters” and “The Sea of Islands”

Submitted by *Kate Fleury* for the *EcoJustice Committee*

With all the water we’ve had around in the past few years, it might be hard to imagine not having enough water! Yet a supply of fresh water may be a major challenge for our human community in the not-so-distant future. Waves from Lake Ontario crashing against the bulwarks on the Braddock Point Lighthouse two years ago meant the Army Corps of Engineers had to do major work to protect the structure. Water flooded many yards, basements, some roads and destroyed many docks. So, why worry? It’s a deep lake, averaging about 280 feet and some places as deep as 800 feet. Lake Ontario, “The Lake of Shining Waters,” has about 394 cubic miles of water and is the 14th largest lake in the world.

About nine million people in the U.S. and Canada depend on Lake Ontario for drinking water. The Great Lakes hold 21% of the world’s surface fresh water. Were you aware that our lake is the most threatened of the Great Lakes? Urban development, electricity generation, pollution from sewage and storm water affect us more than any of the other five lakes. Our lake is fed by rivers and tributaries, and by Lake Erie, which is shallow and has 116 cubic miles of water. Its deepest point is 210 feet, but it averages only 64 feet deep.

During the last three years, in spite of periodic water overages here, there have also been drought conditions during summer months. It made me think about a couple of situations. You know about the Aral Sea, a lake called “The Sea of Islands.” In 1960 it was the world’s fourth largest lake, with a volume of 260 cubic miles. It was shallow, averaging about 50 feet deep. The Soviet Union made a choice to divert water from the two main rivers supplying the lake into irrigation. The lake began to shrink, destroying the fishing industry, supply of fresh water, and by 2007 it was 10% of its former size. There are abandoned, decaying fishing vessels sitting on sand, and one portion of the former lake is now called “The Aralkum Desert.”

It is probably unlikely that we would experience anything like that here, but... there seem to be signs of previous waterways on the surface of Mars. If there was water in an earlier time, there might have been an atmosphere, life—what if there were even “intelligent life”? Just be-

cause we have water damage at times, I think we should not ignore the risks of drought and loss of our fresh water supply. What if the temperature rose, due to global warming, and shallow Lake Erie stopped draining into Lake Ontario? What if earth’s temperature rose and our water evaporated? Could we become another Mars?

No, in spite of discouraging news and many human management mistakes, we could recover. The countries surrounding the Aral Sea are working on refilling their lake. We can protect our lake. We can use strategies to keep fresh water available to our nine million people. We can avoid putting our heads in the metaphorical sand and we can prevent a lake of real sand! ❖

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## Book Group

Submitted by *Shirley Bond*

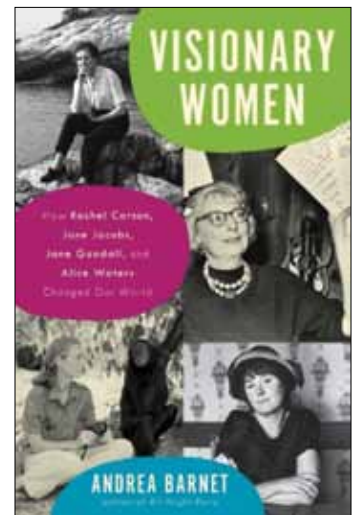
I think you are going to like February’s book selection! The book was recommended to me by a life-long UU friend. She was right on target with this book! She attends the UU church in Santa Rosa and we exchange book titles as she needs book suggestions for her church group.

*Visionary Women* by Andrea Barnett is a biography of four women whose work became beyond invaluable in the 60’s—Rachel Carson, Jane Jacobs, Jane Goodall and Alice Waters. They were women of different backgrounds, who envisioned a world where environmentalists took center stage.

The author notes that this was the period in our history where “post-war America was waging a war on nature, with wrecking balls and toxic pesticides, paving our beautiful land, to put up vast suburban parking lots.”

So... read the book then come to the book discussion on February 24 at 12 noon in the Chalice Room. If you have not had a chance to read the book, no worries. We will have a lively talk. Please join us.

For those who would like a head start, March will introduce *Evicted* by Matthew Desmond. ❖



# UU Book Note:

## *Revisiting the Empowerment Controversy: Black Power and Unitarian Universalism* by Mark Morrison-Reed (2018)

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

The Rev. Dr. Mark D. Morrison-Reed is the leading chronicler of the African-American engagement with Unitarian Universalism.

In *Black Pioneers in a White Denomination* and *Darkening the Doorways*, he wrote about rebuffs and prejudices encountered by black Unitarians and Universalists prior to 1961. In *The Selma Awakening*, he told of how Unitarian Universalists responded to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s call to action for racial justice.

In this, his latest book, he tells the painful story of how Unitarian Universalism was fractured by the Black Power movement of the late 1960s.

The civil rights movement was a drive by black leaders with the help of white allies to overcome racial segregation. The problem with that, from the African-American standpoint, was that the pace of change was limited by what white allies were willing to go along with.

The Black Power movement was a drive for black autonomy independent of liberal white people.

Within the UUA, it took the form of a demand at the 1968 General Assembly for \$1,000,000 to be turned over to a Black Affairs Council with no strings, to be used for the betterment of the black community. The GA agreed to pay the money in four annual installments of \$250,000 each.

Some UUs, both black and white, rejected this. They formed a Black and White Alternative. The deeper problem was that the UUA was undergoing a fiscal crisis, and the denomination could not afford to spend the money and still function.

Supporters of the Black Affairs Council did not accept this as an excuse. The denomination was split. Friendships and even some marriages were destroyed.

The tragedy was that

all sides in the conflict were well-meaning people, trying to do what they thought was right, but unable to accept the good faith of their opponents.

Eventually the whole thing petered out, but with such bitterness left behind that Rev. Morrison-Reed did not feel he could write this book until now.

He reported the conflict in granular detail, not only the conflict between factions in the denomination, but within individual churches.

Along the way, he drew a portrait of the UUA just a few years after merger—old Unitarian families in New England, newly-organized small fellowships, big urban churches with substantial black membership, Universalists experiencing buyers remorse over merger, Canadians on the sidelines.

I don't think anybody will write a better or more complete account.

One thing I take from this book is the ambiguity of the word "empowerment." A high school principal can empower a student council, and an employer can empower a workers' committee, but the real power remains with those who are doing the empowering.

During this era, I was involved with a small UU fellowship in western Maryland. I was an onlooker who thought of the whole controversy as a psycho-drama—a conflict over symbols rather than substance.

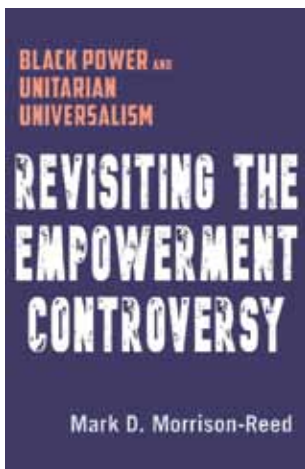
But psycho-drama is a therapeutic technique that can lead to healing and transformation. Rev. Morrison-Reed thinks that without this painful experience, the UUA would not have the diversity and commitment to diversity it does today.

∞∞∞∞

*Revisiting the Empowerment Controversy* may be bought or borrowed from the First Universalist Church library during coffee hour on Sunday. Rev. Morrison-Reed and his wife Donna were co-pastors of First Universalist Church from 1979 to 1989. ❖



Mark Morrison-Reed





Central East  
Region

## The Healthy Congregation

Every congregation has its own unique character and culture, yet vital and vibrant congregations all have something in common: healthy communication and behavior habits.

This day-long workshop will give you tools, techniques and practices to help your congregation to accept differences, keep anxiety from taking over, learn how to disagree without destructive conflict, and work together to serve your greater purpose in the world.

**Date:** Saturday, March 9, 2019  
**Arrive:** 8:30am  
**Program:** 9:00am – 4:00pm  
**Registration:** <https://www.uua.org/central-east/events>

**Cost:** \$25 (includes lunch & materials)

**Location:**

**Calvary St. Andrews Church  
95 Averill Ave.  
Rochester, NY 14620.**

Please bring a canned good or non-perishable food item for our host church's food pantry.

### WHY TAKE THE HEALTHY CONGREGATION?

Congregations whose leaders participate this training and incorporate it in their practices experience less destructive conflict and more growth.

### WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE?

Ministers, religious educators, board members, committee chairs, potential leaders, etc.

### Sponsored by:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Universalist Church of Rochester
- 1<sup>st</sup> Unitarian Church of Rochester

### Facilitator:

**Rev. Renee Ruchotzke**



## 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 in the Jewish and Christian traditions.

### Worship service begins at 10:30 am Sundays

**Minister** | The Rev. Lane Campbell  
**Director of Life Span Faith Development** |

The Rev. Michelle Yates

**Music Director** | Brock Tjosvold

**Sexton** | Brandon Fagan

**Nursery Care Provider** | Carol Williams &  
Sundae Hodge

**Office Administrator** | Emma Barry

*Office hours, Tuesday—Friday, 9:00 am to 3:45 pm;  
closed Monday. 585-546-2826*

### Board of Trustees 2018–2019

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More information is available on our website:

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

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