



Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

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Sunday Services | October 2025

October 5 | *Liberation into Wilderness*

In a time when we may feel politically powerless, small, or ineffectual, we could turn to despair. Or to the sort of mischief that chips away at the edifice of empire and brings a different sort of power to the small and the vulnerable. Let us imagine some good trouble-making together.

— Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell

October 12 | *Life After Doom: Liberation*

Brian McLaren's book, *Life After Doom: Wisdom and Courage for a World Falling Apart*, helps us imagine a way forward through climate disruption. Let's take a broader look at "doom" and consider some different kinds of wisdom.

— Rev. Peggy Meeker

October 19 | *Abolition Unfinished*

We tend to talk about abolition as a finished project, a historical movement. But if we are not all free yet, can abolition be done? In what ways are we still called to be abolitionists today?

— Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell

October 26 | *God is Change: Annual Service of Remembrance*

As we face the seasons changing, leaves changing, our clocks changing (next Sunday!), and the world turning round and round in a spiral of cycles, always different from the ones before, we take a moment to embrace the holiness of change itself. Join us for our annual service of remembrance and grief. People who attend are invited to bring pictures and mementos of those you love who have died for a shared altar. In story, song, and ritual, we will honor the truth and power of change in all its forms.

— Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell

❖ Services begin at 10:30am ❖

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. ❖



Holding the Truth of Change

*A Message from
Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell*

Dear ones,

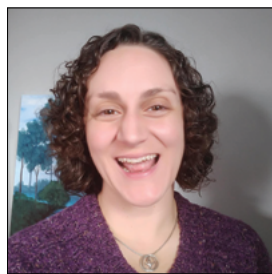
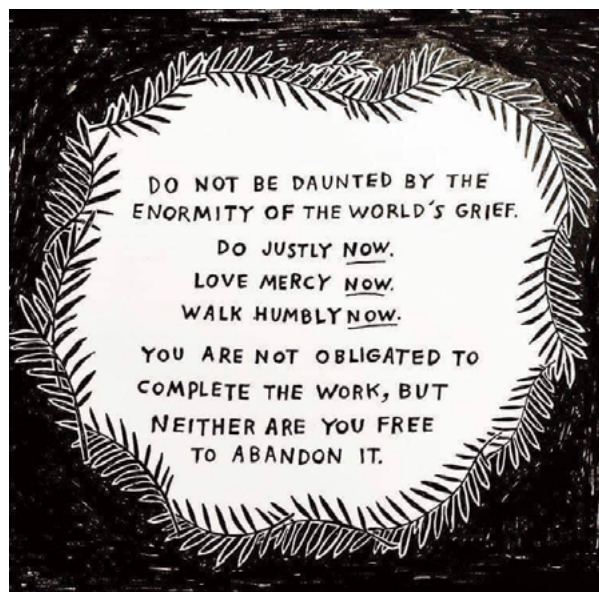
I love fall. As the Jewish High Holy Days pass each year, I think, Yes! What a perfect time to mark the beginning of the year! It always feels much more like New Year's to me in September than it does in the middle of winter--a new school year, a new program year at church, a reconvening in the pews of summer travelers and lake worshipers, our own burst of new energy echoed in the trees' bursts of color.

Of course, the color is death. The leaves are getting ready to drop and decay. The crisp crunching underfoot that feels like newness is also an ending. It is the promise that each new beginning includes a letting go. A loss of what was.

In this time, the earth is inviting us to see how all things new and lovely hold loss within them, and how all our endings hold the power of new life as well. Let us take the time in this season of coming together anew to hold this strange dichotomy of the great circle in our hearts. As my favorite author, Octavia Butler, put it, "The only lasting truth is change."

So glad to be changing with you,

Rev. Eileen ❖



The Chicken or the Egg?

*A Message from
Rev. Michelle Yates*

In my "scientific" opinion, it's the egg. Fresh from the "cave chicken," containing a chick with a mutation that will prove advantageous in its environment. But for now, it sits, growing, getting ready to do a new thing when the moment arrives.

Now being a whole new thing, that chicken, much like Rudolph the red nosed reindeer, may find it challenging. It may not be able to join in some "cave chicken" games. (LOL!) But generation after generation, the chicken survives, and the "cave chicken" does not.

Our church has expressed its interest in being a welcoming and supportive place for families to grow with us. While I can't guarantee that "if we build it, they will come," I do know for sure that if it isn't here and ready, they won't stay.

Sunday after Sunday, a family that finds people and a program ready to welcome them is more likely to return than if they find promises that we 'might' plan a program if they come more often, or if more families come, or if...

So what that means is we will be planning programs to be ready to receive families and children, and we will need volunteers at the ready: to greet them, connect with them, and support them as they find their fit in our community. We need you to consider if you can say "yes" to being a family greeter at special events or Sunday mornings.

Not sure? Consider, "Just 1."

Volunteer for "Just 1" Special Event or Potluck to welcome families, get to know them, and support them in connecting to others in the congregation.

Volunteer for "Just 1" Sunday to be present with Carol Williams in the childcare room during choir practice, and/or during Sunday Services. You will have the opportunity to get to know our children as they play, complete projects, and participate in a child-focused worship service.

To learn more about regular or "Just 1" volunteer opportunities, or get in on the planning, connect with me in person or at edu@uuroc.org.

Yours in the Journey, Rev. Michelle ❖



Annual Remembrance Sunday: *Litany of Names*

Submitted by Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell

The last Sunday in October, 10/26, marks our annual Remembrance Sunday. It is a time to come together to grieve, to remember those who have died, and to mark the universal experience of loss. Each year at this time, we make space for remembrance and we honor our promise to hold one another in all our joys and all our sorrows.

We are working on a beautiful sung litany of names of those who have died. **If you have a loved one who has died, especially in the past year, whose name you would like included, please send it to Rev. Eileen.**

We will be compiling a list of names for this litany and for an insert in the order of service. **Please send all names before 3pm on Thursday, October 23 so that we can assure they will be included in this important service.**

All are invited to bring a photo or a memento of a loved one to place on our shared altar at the front of the Sanctuary.

We look forward to sharing this truly important and timely ritual with you at the end of the month. ❖

Scent-sitivities: A Gentle Reminder

Submitted by Rev. Michelle Yates

As we regularly consider how we welcome people and make our spaces inclusive, please remember that perfumes and strongly scented body products can cause migraine headaches and other allergic reactions for some people. Let's be mindful of those with scent-sitivities. ❖



Facilitator Training: October 8, 6-8pm

Submitted by Rev. Michelle Yates

Do you currently facilitate a group at church, or would you consider leading a Connection Circle but you would like some training first?

Join us in person in the Clara Barton lounge at church or on-line for this hybrid training facilitated by Rev. Michelle Yates.

We'll focus on preparation and administration, establishing a group covenant (agreements), group dynamics, and interventions for upholding the covenant. For those that choose to stay for it, we will end with a tutorial on how to set up the meeting OWL for hybrid (in person and on zoom) meetings.

Email Rev. Michelle at edu@uuroc.org to RSVP, with questions, or with interest in a monthly Connection Circle for facilitators. ❖

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 for the link, or look on uuroc.org!

Sunday, Oct. 5 | Have We Voted For The Last Time - Is Trump's Presidency Permanent? *In-person*

Bill Elwell will lead a discussion on whether elections will be cancelled and Trump successfully assumes all power as a full-scale dictator. He said he'd only be a dictator for the first day, but maybe he was using the term "day" as used in Genesis.

Oct. 7 | The Doomsday Machine

Noam Chomsky says there are two existential threats to the survival of the human race—climate change and nuclear war. We hear little about the latter, even though the government is in an undeclared war with Russia, Iran, and other countries and all treaties/agreements aimed at preventing nuclear war have been dismantled. Phil Ebersole will lead a discussion.

Oct. 14 | Have you had Enough Already?!

Each Thursday afternoon, since DJT was re-elected, Joy Leccese has been hosting weekly live Zoom drop-in discussion sessions to give kindred spirits a safe space to share their concerns and fears about what Trump 2.0 is doing and what we might be able to do about it, even if only in small, seemingly insignificant ways. It's also a place to share good news we learn about. Staying connected, grounded, and focused is essential to maintaining our mental health. Join us.

Oct. 21 | Fostering Dogs — Pros/Cons and Benefits

There's a growing need for volunteers to foster "Pandemic Puppies" being surrendered to shelters and rescue groups. If you have fostered dogs or know folks who do, share your thoughts and experiences with us. Those of us who foster can share some pros and cons, but also benefits. John Lukes will moderate.

Oct. 28 | Open Topic

Let's take another opportunity to discuss what is on our minds, challenges, good news, and to continue brain-storming discussion topics and presenters. John Lukes will moderate.

Have a topic for us? Contact our team with your proposal at DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org. ❖



Puzzles and Pumpkins!

Submitted by Justin Wilson

Join us for a fun Halloween event right here at First Universalist!

Puzzle Swap!

Bring your gently used, complete puzzles to swap with others. For each puzzle you bring, you can take a different one home. Just in time to stock up on indoor fun activities for the coming winter.

Pumpkin Decorating!

We will have pumpkins to decorate with a variety of art supplies, safe for the whole family.

Scavenger Hunt Hallway!

For older youth, sleuth out clues in our spooky second floor hallway to earn prizes.

Food and Treats!

We will have a buffet assortment of healthy finger foods, enough for a dinner! Pumpkin flavored desserts too.

Spooky Stories!

Join us for spooky stories in the lounge in between our decorating and puzzle swapping. ❖





Social Justice Plate: Metro Justice

Our October Social Justice Plate Offering is designated for *Metro Justice* and will be collected on October 19. *Metro Justice* is an organization of progressives in Rochester, NY working towards social and economic justice for all people.

Founded in 1965, *Metro Justice* is Rochester's leading grassroots, member-driven, progressive organization working for social and economic justice. *Metro Justice* is led by an elected body of members, our Council. The Council makes most of the major decisions of the organization, both politically and financially. Council members are some of the most active members of the organization and are elected every year at their Annual Members Meeting. *Metro Justice* also has three Task Forces that work on specific projects that are member-driven: The Rochester Committee on Latin America (ROCLA), Ciudad Hermana, and Peace Action and Education.

Please contribute to support this important work. For more info visit metrojustice.org. ❖



FIAC: Process of Choosing a Social Justice Whole Church Project

Submitted by Connie Valk, Co-Chair

Our Faith In Action Council (FIAC) is the administrative umbrella for social justice activities. During this church year we'll be seeking your input to choose a new/or renewed Whole Church project.

A Whole Church project is one where every member of the congregation can find a way to participate from a menu of opportunities — some educational, some hands-on, and others by in-kind support.



Here's how you'll be able to participate in the process for choosing the project:

- Completing the online/paper survey to be distributed during the autumn, which will ask for your suggestions;
- Participating in the several focus groups that will be held during the church year;
- Asking to speak with the FIAC Team with your ideas (fiac@uuroc.org).

Our goal is to present a motion at the Annual Meeting in June for a Whole Project choice and proposed leadership. We appreciate your support! ❖



Inspired by this week's rapid response to masked kidnappers in our neighborhood? Now is the time to **get involved**.

We're looking for volunteers with all kinds of skillsets, including **graphic design, social media, flyer distribution, safety marshaling, street medics, and more!**

HAVE IDEAS? WANT TO MAKE AN IMPACT?



Fill out our volunteer form to get in touch! We can't wait to work together.

www.5050rocny.org



Committee Chairs (left to right) Heather Jones and Sue Keefe

Spotlight on Committees & Groups: *Caring*

Submitted by Heather Jones, Caring Co-Chair

In our UU community, so much of the heart and hands-on work happens behind the scenes — in our committees. That's why the Communications Committee is launching *Spotlight on Committees & Groups*, a regular newsletter feature that celebrates the people and purpose behind these vital teams.

Each month, we'll lift up one committee's (or group's) mission, share what they're working on, and highlight ways you can get involved. Whether you're passionate about justice, music, spiritual exploration, care and connection, or the logistics that keep us running smoothly — there's a place for your gifts. Whether you're new to our congregation or have been here for years, we hope *Spotlight on Committees & Groups* will inspire you to get involved in a new way.

We hope this series will deepen your understanding of how we live our UU values through shared leadership and collaborative service — and maybe even spark your curiosity to join in!

Let's build beloved community, together.

Current Chair & Members: Heather Jones and Sue Keefe (Co-Chairs), Members: Paula Marchese, Katherine Flynn, Kathi Milch, Donna Anderson, Eileen Fernandez

Your committee's mission or purpose: To provide short-term help to members, friends, and staff of the First Universalist Church through caring, comforting, and visitation. We do our best within the limits of our resources to see that those who are experiencing a period of grief, sorrow, joy, or need due to life's transitions are attended to by someone from our church.

Committee responsibilities: Members of the Caring Committee send cards, and make calls and

visits to church members in times joy and sorrow. We carefully note the Joys and Sorrows shared during Sunday Services and attend to those needs that are indicated. We assist at the Memorial Service receptions held in the Clara Barton Lounge. It is our responsibility to be respectful of the privacy needs of our fellow church members. It is our responsibility to extend the circle of care within our beloved community.

Something you wish people knew about your committee: We love to make people feel special, noticed, and cared for and truly appreciate your feedback.

One big/special project your committee has been working on lately: We are working to have for each Caring Committee member a list of names of church family members about whom it is their responsibility to make sure that when needed, appropriate contact is made.

Are you looking for new members?: Yes!

Are members voted on by the congregation or do they volunteer?: They volunteer

How often do you meet? : We have been meeting casually after church services, more formally for lunch meetings bi-monthly.

How do you meet? : In-person

Are there any special qualifications/talents required to serve on your committee? : To be caring, discreet, and a good listener

What is the Committee email: caring@uuroc.org ❖



For the first time in known memory, First Universalist church-goers enjoyed accordion duets. Tom Williams and Adam Durand provided music to amplify and enrich the Sunday service message of "Lessons We Have Learned" led by worship associates Tom, Kitty, and Patti.



New at the Sanctuary: Wiggle Zone!

Submitted by Rev. Michelle Yates & Emma Barry

Worship doesn't mean sitting still — and now, it doesn't have to!

We've created a Wiggle Zone at the back of the sanctuary — a soft, cozy space with quiet toys and calming activities for anyone (of any age!) who needs to move or take a moment during the service.

In true Unitarian Universalist spirit, we celebrate many ways of being present. Come when you need to, stay as long as you like. This is one more way we live into our values of inclusion, accessibility, and honoring many ways of being present in spiritual community. ✦



EcoJustice: Dates to Save for Upcoming Events

Submitted by Sarah Singal

- **10/18/25 - No Kings Protest:** If you would like to voice your concern for federal policies that are harming the planet and life on Earth, as well as a host of other damaging measures, consider joining others at a “No Kings” march with a presence across the nation.

- **11/16/25 - Summit: Hope, Resilience and Resistance in a Time of Climate Crisis,** hosted by Rochester Area Interfaith Climate Action (RAICA) at Temple B'rith Kodesh from 1-4:45pm.

- **11/8 or 11/22 - Vegan Potluck Lunch,** hosted by EcoJustice and Animal Ministry. We invite our congregation and friends to a vegan potluck to celebrate the positive effects of a vegan diet. The date will be November 8 or 22. More details to come!

The EcoJustice Group meets on the first Sunday of each month in the Chalice Room at noon. The next meeting is October 5. All are welcome! ✦





A Journey of Faith

Submitted by Justin Wilson, Congregational Life Coord.

I believe my decision to join First Universalist in this Congregational Life Coordinator position was built on a faith that I did not know I had.

I had never been a particularly religious or spiritual person. I did not attend church services growing up. My family considered themselves ‘Methodist,’ but I never fully explored what that meant or fully embraced that identity. As I entered adulthood and began to explore my identity as a queer person, ‘church’ was not a place of sanctuary but a place to be avoided. The idea that my inherent worth, my place in any afterlife, or my spirit or soul might be lesser, condemned, or sinful was what I expected to hear should I enter a church: not exactly a message I wanted to absorb.

I did not know how to really categorize, compartmentalize, or describe my spirituality. It just seemed that other things were more important, more pressing, more tangibly real at that time in my life. Graduating from college during the Great Recession, finding a job and paying off my student loans were at the top of my list. Managing depression was the constant battle always in the background. Faith, spirituality, and religion seemed too abstract, providing more questions than answers.

After marrying my husband in 2013 – we did not get married in a church, and this was before national marriage equality – we ended up moving to Rochester in 2014. Over the last decade, my life has swerved in thoughtful yet unpredictable directions: buying a house and moving (twice), fostering a child, multiple jobs, diagnosing and treating a chronic health condition, trying to stay safe during an isolating pandemic, losing a beloved dog of 15 years and adopting another, all while trying to stay hopeful as global political, economic, and ecological circumstances shift gravely.

It was only in the past year or so that I began to recognize that I was lacking a sense of community and connection. I was talking last year with my best friend of nearly 20 years, also queer, who happened

to become employed at a church. This was quite the surprise to me – while this friend had explored various spiritual practices and had held roles that were certainly religion-adjacent, actually working for a church was not what I expected. I didn’t know “church people.”

As I talked with this friend about their experience and how excited they were with what they were getting to do, neural connections in my own brain began to spark. They were doing puppet shows for children’s summer programs and religious education, singing in benefit talent shows, organizing fundraising community garage sales, collaborating with other churches toward addressing homelessness and poverty, and so much more. While I had worked in non-profit organizations for nearly 15 years, often in community-facing and direct-service roles, this type of real service to a dedicated community had somehow been evasive. True connection was missing for me.

When I stumbled upon the Congregational Life Coordinator job posting, this lingering conversation in my mind, I decided to give it a shot. I wasn’t sure what I would find after applying and receiving an invite to interview. Meeting with Reverend Lane-Mairead and then congregants on the Personnel Committee, connections bubbled forth. Both my brain and my heart nudged me onward.

It’s been a little over two months since those meetings, and each and every day I’m discovering and building not only connections with this community, but with my own faith and spirituality that was craving nurturing. I’m so grateful for the warmth, the welcome this congregation has offered me. You all have been a blessing and an anchor. I am honored and eager to support all of you in this journey together. ✦





Membership Committee

Submitted by Donna Anderson, Membership Chair

On September 7 our congregation celebrated as we welcomed Rev. Eileen Casey Campbell to be our new minister. Every Sunday we have visitors checking out our church. It's wonderful to watch folks interacting with our visitors and inviting them to our coffee hour after the service.

Lois Baum invited Anita to come visit, and this past Sunday she came. She's looking for a more liberal alternative. We hope she comes back! Let's invite more people in our lives to our church (be like Lois, invite your people!)

On Sunday, September 21, Rev. Eileen conducted a UU & You session. If you missed it and would like to learn more about our church and/or explore membership at First Universalist please contact Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell at minister@uuroc.org. ✚



Let's Make a NEW Room for YRUU!

Submitted by Justin Wilson, Congregational Life Coord.

Mark your calendars and plan ahead: the former YRUU Room on the second floor will be undergoing renovations. We want to create a modern and welcoming room for small groups, especially teens and young adults. This will increase our ability to offer more programs to attract new congregants, along with adding to our rental space options to outside groups on an accessible floor.

We need your help to make this happen! Right now, the room is host to a variety of items: old furniture, toys, equipment, and other belongings. The first phase of the room makeover is clearing the room out.

Our "clean sweep" date is Sunday, November 16. If you have items in this room, please collect them; if there are program-related items that belong elsewhere, please move them; and if there are any items that should be saved from this room, please identify them. Unclaimed items remaining in the room after worship services on November 16 may be donated or discarded.

If you would like to help with cleaning, renovating, or re-imagining this space, please contact me at conglife@uuroc.org. ✚





Animal Ministry: *Possum*

Submitted by Lois Baum

I am the shadow you see crossing your yard at night, rifling through your trash can, the wide-eyed creature you call ugly, filthy, or even rabid. I am the possum. And though you may not know it, I do more for you than you could ever imagine.

I am not fierce. My teeth may look sharp, but they are for crunching beetles, ticks, and the scraps you leave behind. I am shy, gentle, and easily frightened. When danger comes, I do not fight.

I fall limp, my body still, my breath shallow. “Playing possum,” you call it. But it is no game. It is the way I survive, a desperate act that often makes people laugh or strike me anyway.

I am your unseen ally. Each season I eat thousands upon thousands of ticks — the very parasites that carry Lyme disease, the sickness that threatens your children, your pets, your hikers in the woods.

I clean your gardens of slugs and snails, I clear away rotting fruit, I consume dead animals that might otherwise spread disease. Without me, the balance tips, and your world becomes just a little harsher, a little more dangerous.

Yet still, I am misunderstood. You mistake me for a rat, though I am not. I am America’s only marsupial, carrying my babies in a pouch like a kangaroo.

They cling to my back as I walk the fence line at dusk, their tiny faces peeking over my fur. I am a mother, often burdened with more than a dozen mouths to feed. And still, I keep working — quietly, humbly, invisibly. But often, I die for no reason at all.

Your cars strike me on dark roads, and few stop to help. Your dogs chase me, your traps catch me, your hands raise sticks against me.

You see me in your yard and think I am a threat, when all I want is to pass through and move on. Many of my kind die in fear, our young left clinging to lifeless bodies, never given a chance.

I do not blame you entirely. Fear is powerful. My face, with its pointed snout and unblinking eyes, un-

nerves you. My slow shuffle makes me seem sickly. You see only the surface and not the service. You see a scavenger, not a caretaker. You see a pest, not a protector.

Do you know what happens when you let me be? Fewer ticks on your pets. Fewer rotting carcasses on the roadside. Cleaner gardens and healthier ecosystems. I ask for so little — a patch of dark to move in, a safe passage under your porch, the chance to raise my young in peace.

And so, I plead with you: look at me differently. See not a rat, but a marsupial mother. See not a pest, but a partner. See not an intruder, but a night worker who cleans what you cannot see.

When you catch me in your yard, remember that I am carrying out a mission that benefits you more than it benefits me. Leave me to my work, and I will leave you in peace.

Protect the wild corners of your neighborhoods. Teach your children that possums are not monsters but quiet helpers. For every small kindness you show me, I return it in ways you may never notice — but would surely miss if I were gone.

I am the possum. I am mocked, yet essential. I am feared, yet I mean no harm. I am dying in numbers too great to ignore, and I am asking you, from the quiet of the night: let me live, so that you may live better too. - by The Animal Maximalist ♦





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Two Centuries of Love at the Center

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- *Bicentennial celebrations*
- *Workshops on stewardship, resistance, and more*
- *Tours, talks, hikes, music, and fellowship*

***Join us as we joyfully celebrate
the Bicentennials of NYSCU and
the UU Church of Canton!***



Housing at Holiday Inn Express, Canton, NY, 315-386-1161
Local hospitality options available: office@uucantonny.org

Registration, hotel booking link, and details at nyscu.org



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.

Minister | Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell

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 Provider | Carol Williams

Worship begins at 10:30am on Sundays

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More info is available on our website: uuroc.org

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