

# Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

May 2014

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## Sunday Services | May 2014

**May 4** | *To Find What The World is Trying to Be*

The poet William Stafford writes, 'Our job is to find what the world is trying to be.' Today we will ask how the wisdom of the past and the promise of the future might guide us in that task.

– Rev. Celie Katovitch



**May 11** | *And They Said...*

A service for Mother's Day, "working women", old broads, their children – and much more.

– Rev. Martha Munson



**May 18** | *Egypt*

Moses led the Israelites through the wilderness for 40(!) years. They complained, he was a faithful (if sometimes reluctant) leader. And then the Promised Land came into view. What was expected there? What do you expect of your own "promised land", after your time of "wandering"?

– Rev. Martha Munson



**May 25** | *To Be of Service*

Reflections for Memorial Day. What might it mean to give up one's life (literally or figuratively) for some cause or effort?

– Rev. Martha Munson

**A special congregational meeting will be held on May 4 immediately following the service to vote to call Rev. Celie Katovitch as our new settled minister.**

Our regular morning service as well as Religious Education classes begin at 10:30am.



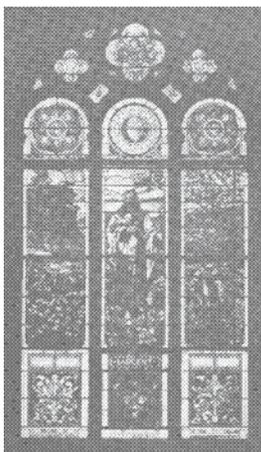


## Walking With You

Message from the Interim Minister, Martha Munson

It seems to me that the ministry of the laity and the ministry of the minister together are quite like a good stew. Imagine a large soup pot, this congregation, filled with all sorts of hearty things, the people. There are potatoes, carrots, celery, perhaps fish or meat. A host of elements make up make up this satisfying stew (which, by the way, is good for you) and the minister, the professional minister, is the seasoning. You are the body of First Universalist, the substance, and each of you adds your distinctive flavor and character to the stew. The minister, any minister, can only add the seasoning. To be sure, there are a wide variety of seasonings. Since I'm a person who likes a lot of seasoning, I think that it's essential for good stew. The minister may be a subtle as salt and pepper or as feisty as garlic and peppers; oregano and rosemary are possible. Seasoning combinations are endless, as are ministerial "types". If the "match" between a congregation and a minister is a bad one, the minister might add chocolate to your stew. (For of course, where that minister belongs is in a congregation that is a sundae, where chocolate would add a much needed touch!) I see First Universalist as a stew: hearty, good for you, filling, with a number of distinct elements being blended together into a feast. The seasoning, at its best, adds something important, but it changes the flavor and not the substance of the meal.

Yours, faithfully, *Martha* ❖



## Capital Campaign Update: PACT



Submitted by Connie Valk and Ed Deller, Major Gift Co-chairs

Following the March 16 congregational vote unanimously supporting the Exterior Renovation project, the major gifts phase for a capital campaign swung into full gear. The goal of the campaign is to raise \$400,000. With support from Ann Rhody, Marcy Klein, David Damico, Bill Jones and Michael Scott our virtual team has:

- Created a name and logo for the campaign: PACT- Preserving a Cultural Treasure
- Solicited support from prominent community members to be honorary board members for our campaign. Long term member Dick Brush has agreed to be honorary chair.
- Secured a substantial loan at an attractive interest rate to support the short-term cash flow needs of the project.
- Created a Case Statement to support further grant applications and external fund requests.
- Started to meet with potential major donors from the congregation. We are pleased to report that Dick Brush has graciously offered to provide \$100,000 to this campaign if the congregation can raise \$200,000 by the end of 2014. More than \$150,000 has been pledged so far. We are grateful for Dick's generosity and also very encouraged by the generous response of other major donors within the congregation.

We feel blessed to have such a caring and generous congregation. ❖



## With Regret

With regret, we report that Lori Staubitz, *Director of Religious Education* is standing down. The **Personnel Committee** is actively working on selecting a new person for that position. ❖



## Reports from the District Meeting

Submitted by Michael Scott

**The Saint Lawrence and Ohio-Meadville Districts of the UUA**—representing some 70 congregations in Upstate New York, Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia—was held March 28–29 in Erie, PA. More than 300 adult UUs and 50+ youth were in attendance, including 6 members of First Universalist: Karl Abbott, Hal Bauer, Karen Dau, Ed Deller, Michael Scott, and Laretta Young. Also present were **Eric Meter** (our interim minister from 2007–8, now serving in Columbus, OH) and Sally Hamlin (our settled minister from 2008–11), both of whom send their regards.

Friday’s speaker was the **Rev. Pricilla Richter** of Schenectady, who spent a recent sabbatical visiting faith communities of all types and traditions, looking for clues to why they die or thrive. Her message included several “hard truths” about the changing nature of American religious life. Karl Abbott tells me he was particularly struck by the message “that we need to go out where the ‘Millenials’ are and get involved with what they are doing if we want to bring them into UUism. That is, we can’t just expect them to walk in the door.”

This theme was echoed in a Saturday workshop on *Living in a ‘Spiritual But Not Religious’ World*, which several of us attended. The statistics are quite striking: 72% of Millenials (those born in the late 20th century)

## Garden Update

Submitted by Sarah Singal

Although we had a late spring, the front flower garden has now started the relentless arc of growth, bloom, fading flowers, and energy capture which is repeated for a long series of plants throughout the growing season. Thanks to members of the garden committee who have quietly tended this plot over the cold months.

Our permaculture garden in the south alcove, part of the Lots of Food movement, is in a holding pattern while the roof work is being planned and performed. We will probably put in some annuals at some point, just to keep the public food idea out there, but our eventual goal is to have mostly perennials in the central area, and a mixture

self-identify as “more spiritual than religious.” 32% of them have no formal religious affiliation. Most are not looking for a religious community, and most will not “come back when they have kids”—at least not on their own. The good news is that Unitarian Universalism is uniquely poised to offer depth of meaning to this new generation, without conservative dogma. The challenge is to bring the message to where the people are.

Friday evening entertainment was provided by the **Rev. Meg Barnhouse**, of Austin, TX, and her partner, singer/songwriter **Kiya Heartwood**. Rev. Barnhouse also delivered the Saturday keynote. Ed Deller says he found their “insightful and delightful musical messages” to be a highlight of the conference. “I came away,” he says, “feeling the energy of the broader group and the opportunity to learn and grow with them as we tackle common problems with a shared belief.”

The big news from the business meeting was that the governing boards of the Saint Lawrence, Ohio-Meadville, Metro NY, and Joseph Priestly Districts have voted to merge their individual organizations into a single Central East Regional Group (CERG), encompassing all the UU congregations from New York south to Washington DC and west through most of Ohio. Congregations will need to vote on this as well: we can expect to hear quite a bit more about “regionalization” in the months ahead. Laretta Young sees exciting opportunities: “The CERG group is very professional and organized,” she says. “We can learn a lot from them.” Laretta also stresses the need to work with other local churches. “We are not separate islands. Working together has so much potential to make a difference in our part of the world.” To learn more about CERG, visit [cerguaa.org](http://cerguaa.org). ❖

of perennials and annuals in planters around the perimeter. During the roof work Lori Staubitz, as our *Lots of Food* coordinator, has suggested placing tarps over the whole alcove.



What do we need from you? If you have an interest in gardening, you are welcome to join the garden committee. And if you don’t want to commit to committee membership, you can still choose to help with any of the tasks: watering, planting annuals, dead-heading spent blooms or plants that have died back, tending the planters along Court Street, joining us for a Saturday clean-up day, or just picking up any trash that catches your eye as you walk past. Please see Sarah Singal or Connie Valk or email [ssingal@rochester.rr.com](mailto:ssingal@rochester.rr.com). ❖

# Our Outlook: Paper or Digital

*Submitted by Ed Deller and David Damico*

We currently send the monthly Our Outlook newsletter to our full church wide mailing list as a paper version in addition to posting it on the church web site. We would like to offer an alternative. Are you reading the paper version? Would an electronic version be an acceptable alternative for you? In keeping with our 7<sup>th</sup> principle regarding respect for the interdependent web of existence, starting in August, we will mail the paper copies only to those who request it.

Our church newsletter is part of how the church communicates within the congregation and with the larger community. Each issue is packed with important information that connects members and friends

with events happening in our church community. Although the size is usually 8 pages, David often has to increase that to 10 or 12 just to fit all our activities. Even the summer issues are full! We are a very active congregation, maintaining our UU message and identity by involvement.

We ask that you contact the church office by email ([firstuu@frontiernet.net](mailto:firstuu@frontiernet.net)) or phone (585-546-2826) if you want to keep receiving the printed Our Outlook by mail. If we have not heard from you by August 1 you will no longer receive the paper version of the church newsletter. The Our Outlook will be available to you as an email or by visiting the church web site. ❖

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## Stewardship 2014

*Thanks for your GIFT!*

*Submitted by Ann Rhody*

Our stewardship campaign, Generously Investing for Tomorrow, has been very successful! Thanks to so many of you who have returned a pledge card. We have already exceeded last year's pledge total, and there are a few more pledges out there yet to be received (if you are one of them, please return your pledge card ASAP or contact Ann Rhody at [annrhody@yahoo.com](mailto:annrhody@yahoo.com). Everyone is important!).

The Finance Committee is currently working to shape a healthy budget for 2014-15, thanks to all who pledged. On Stewardship Sunday, we had an impressive array of pies, and safe to say no one went away hungry after indulging. Thanks to all who contributed a pie and helped with set up and clean up- special thanks to Bill and Becky Elwell and Ginger Sykes for their work on this. All of you truly do help to shape our identity as UU's  
**Downtown GEM!** ❖

## From Your Transition Team- Save the Date!

How exciting it is for us to have a candidate for settled minister, after a few years of hard work in our transition and search. Although we find ourselves focused primarily on the future, it is always important to acknowledge and celebrate our past accomplishments. And of course, the guiding force in those accomplishments has been our interim minister, Rev. Martha Munson.

To that end, we ask you to save the date of Sunday, **June 22 at 12:30 PM** for our annual all-church picnic at the Acorn Shelter, in Durand-Eastman Park. Along with the delicious foods and fellowship, there will be a wonderful celebration to thank, and bid farewell to Rev. Martha Munson. Don't miss it!!

Ann Rhody for the Transition Team  
Karl Abbott, chair, Bill Elwell, Mary Louise Gerek ❖

AND + NOW + ABIDETH + FAITH  
HOPE + LOVE + THESE + THREE + BUT  
THE + GREATEST + OF + THESE + IS + LOVE

# How We Chose Rev. Celie

Submitted by the Search Committee

*Candidating Week* is April 27–May 4! During the week, Rev. Celie will preach at two Sunday services and participate in events all week long to allow as many in the congregation as possible to get to know her. One of the highlights will be an all-church potluck dinner on Friday evening, May 2nd, at 5:30 in the Lounge, where we will share a meal and fellowship (and music!) with Rev. Celie. This is designed to be a kid-friendly event, and all are welcome!

With the search in its final stage, we have received questions from those curious about the search process or about the other ministers we interviewed. We are bound to strict confidentiality about the names and characteristics of other ministers we considered, because it is important not to jeopardize ministers' relationships with their current congregations or job. What we can do, though, is explain just how we came to choose Rev. Celie as our candidate.

Here's a review of the process that led us to invite Celie for *Candidating Week*:

Last Fall's congregational survey, cottage meetings, and strategic interviews led to a compiled profile of ministerial qualities we seek for the Congregational Record, a document that the UUA Transitions Office requires so that the ministers in search may find out which churches they would like to serve.

## Here are excerpts:

"We seek a minister who will be our spiritual and intellectual leader, and the most important forum for such leadership is in worship. Ideally, the Sunday worship service would be "unmissable", holding the congregation together while drawing in visitors. The Sunday sermon is a highlight of the week for us. We appreciate stimulating and challenging sermons that speak both to the mind as well as the heart, and seek a minister who speaks eloquently and effectively. We also appreciate a minister who can make the sanctuary ring with laughter upon occasion. When there is coordinating input from worship associates, music director, and director of religious education the result can be both powerful and empowering, sustaining and healing.



"We seek a minister who values our urban setting, who wants to make a difference in the life of our city, and who can help our church to be more visible in the community..."

"We seek a minister who will broaden our appeal to new members and visitors while not neglecting the committed long term members..."

"We seek a minister whose personal style is warm and approachable..."

"We seek a minister who will help promote our congregation as family friendly, and have enough online social networking skills to attract a younger generation of new members..."

"Finally, we will welcome our new minister with heartfelt enthusiasm, and hope that this individual will settle with us for a long and productive period of living out our Unitarian Universalist faith."

After interviewing ministers who were interested in First Universalist, we believe that Celie is the minister who meets these criteria. We hope you will find time to meet with Rev. Celie during *Candidating Week*, and we especially hope that you will be able to join us for the service that Celie will lead on Sunday, May 4<sup>th</sup>. Since the church's bylaws do not allow proxy voting on this matter, it is very important that members of the congregation remain after the service to participate in the vote to call Rev. Celie Katovitch to be our settled minister. Thanks for your support of the Search Committee during this nearly year-long process to find a new settled minister!

The Search Committee ❖

## Book Club

Submitted by Shirley Bond

Our selection for May is:

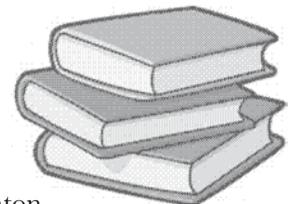
*Cry Beloved Country* by Alan Paton.

The Book Club will meet May 25th@12:15  
Should be Fun.

Any questions please contact...

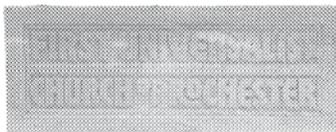
Shirley Bond: [bondshirl@yahoo.com](mailto:bondshirl@yahoo.com)

Sarah Singal: [ssingal@rochester.rr.com](mailto:ssingal@rochester.rr.com) ❖



# Auld Lang Syne

Submitted by Karen Dau, archivist



ON FEBRUARY 10, 2001 a thoughtful passerby took the time to leave a message on the answering machine of Rev. Bill Metzger, then minister of this congregation, that the church's cupola was lying shattered on Court Street. Thankfully no drivers had been injured when it had crashed onto the pavement. Larry Barnes of Batavia, chair of the House Committee, sent this description of the damage in a message to all church members for whom he had email addresses: "During the wind storm that has been going on today, the cupola blew off the top of the church. In doing so, it left a 4 to 6 ft. hole, exposing the area above the sanctuary to weather. As the cupola fell, it broke two rafters and punched a small hole in the pitched roof above the organ pipe room.

The falling cupola also damaged the flat roof over the minister's office, the flat roof over the old steam table room, and punched a hole in the pitched copper roof of the skylight over the old steam table room." Larry goes on to describe joining Rev. Bill and a church officer to meet the fire department, a team from Emergency Enclosures, and soon afterward a four-man emergency crew from the Leo J. Roth roofing company. For most of the afternoon Court Street was closed to traffic. "The roofers, climbing the outside of the building like steeplejacks," he wrote, "worked in the bitter cold and high winds to successfully secure a metal cover over the hole above the sanctuary. They also patched, as best they could during

approaching darkness, the holes in roofing. However, this work represents only a temporary fix..." In the meantime the roof areas needed to be watched from inside for potential leaks during future rainstorms.

Soon the cross from atop the damaged cupola was discovered missing. Then on February 28 Rev. Bill emailed Larry: "The cross was found—in the dumpster. After speculating that some rabid agnostic/atheist type might have done the dastardly deed, it turns out that a cleaning person thought it had been left near the back entrance of the church to be thrown out." During the months that followed, a new cupola was built as an exact replica of the original, this time from a combination of marine plywood, pressure-treated lumber, and mahogany, and with a steel anchoring structure that had not been there previously. The big day for re-mounting the cupola with the use of a huge crane was set for June 28th at 5:30 a.m. A large crowd gathered on the sidewalk across from the church that morning watched the cupola being hoisted into the air, swinging gently from the crane cables as it was slowly, slowly lowered in place. Drivers who wanted to turn onto Court Street that morning were blocked from passage, and some cursed volubly while others shouted out encouragement. Then at last the cupola rested once again on its accustomed perch. Damages from this misadventure had amounted to about \$33,000. ❖

## RAIHN\* Dates

Submitted by Marti Eggers



### Next Volunteer Training Session –

- Wednesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 6:30 pm – Mary Magdalene Church, 1008 Main St., E. Rochester

Volunteers are expected to attend a two-hour training session before or soon after volunteering for the first time. Training sessions orient volunteers to the RAIN philosophy and the expectations of guests and volunteers. There is ample time for questions as well. Seasoned volunteers are also welcome and provide valuable input based on their personal experiences.

### Next Host Week at First Universalist –

- May 25<sup>th</sup> – June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Attend the training session on May 21<sup>st</sup> so that you'll be ready to volunteer for this Hosting Week. We will have 80 volunteer slots to fill, so please try to set aside some time for RAIHN in May!

\* RAIHN, the Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network, is a consortium of 14 faith communities that host families in temporary need of housing, and 31 faith communities that provide volunteers and other support to the host congregations. First Universalist is a host congregation, supported by St. Mary's, Aldersgate United Methodist Church of Greece and the Church of Love Faith Center. Four times a year, for a week each time, volunteers from these congregations work together to provide a welcoming, safe place for the families to come home to after a day at the RAIHN Center where they get help looking for housing and, for some, new employment. We prepare and serve a hot evening meal, help with homework, offer a lap, a story and a hug, a listening ear, a word of encouragement, overnight presence, breakfast and whatever else might be needed before the families return to their jobs or to the Center for another day of hard work. ❖

# Drop-In Discussion, May Schedule

Submitted by David Damico

Drop-in discussions are held each Sunday in the adult lounge on the second floor of our church at 9:15 a.m. except during the summer. 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.

## May 4 | *Soil Alive*

We are first stardust then soil dust as we eat food and grow. Fast food chains, Wegmans, Tops and Wal-Mart aren't sources of good food, but soil is. Hal Bauer will share his experiences as a *NOFA NY Farmer's Pledge Farmer*. Consider how life on earth depends on the story of mother soil. This is the critical part of feeding 7.2 billion people, part of the transition from 20th century dependence on oil to 21st century civilization dependence on soil and renewable energy, including a renewed respect for the significance and complexity of the life of soil.

**May 11** | *Animal Contradictions* by Kimberly Finch  
In the Fall 2013 *UU World*, Kimberly Finch subtitles her article "How Unitarian Universalism can help us sort out our place in the animal world." Later in her article, she writes, "It's not our relationship with animals we need to rethink. We *are* animals." Join David Damico as he facilitates a discussion on this article. It is available online at <http://tinyurl.com/kekmp6n>.

## May 18 | *Open Topic*

## May 25 | *Contrived Dystopia*

*12 Years a Slave* is a true and historical autobiography of a man held as a slave. "New dystopia" novels and movies are fiction, and youth oriented, most commonly of an enslaved, evil world of power and submission. *12 Years a Slave* was not a big box office hit but still won the Oscar for the marvelously presented true story. Fantasy dystopian stories of "a wicked place" are big draws to a young audience. What is the lesson for us in this comparison? Should we ask a youth what is so attractive about a pretend world of evil and power or should we even be paying attention? Facilitated by Beverly Lynn.

If you have a topic to suggest, or, better still, would be willing to present or facilitate discussion of a topic you are interested in, speak to David Damico. ❖

# House News May 2014

Submitted by Ed Deller

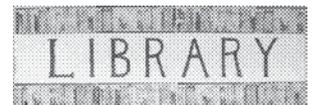
We are happy to report that **Tom Ruganis** will step in as the new House Team chair. He will transition into the role as his responsibilities with the Ministerial Search Committee wind down. Tom replaces Alain Perregaux who served us for many years as the House chair. We are grateful to both Tom and Alain.

The Spring Clean Up day has been set for Saturday morning May 17. There are many tasks, large and small. With just a few hours of your support you can be oh so helpful! Watch the announcements for more details. ❖

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## Dalai Lama

Submitted by Keith Stott



Has reading some of our meditation manuals given you enough to think about? Enough inspiration? More than our Affirmation of Faith? For another perspective on the ideals expressed therein – from another heartfelt expression of them by another member of our human family from across the world – open this book in our library: *The Essential Dalai Lama: His Important Teachings*, edited by one of his students, Rajiv Mehrotra. **Call number is 294.3 M.** ❖



## LUUnch BUUnch

Submitted by Joyce Gilbert

Sunday, May 25, 12:15 at the  
**Sultan Restaurant**, 1659 Mt. Hope Ave.  
*Healthy and Delicious Lebanese food* ★★★★★.  
*Hope to see you there!* ❖

## **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 services and Religious Education classes begin at 10:30am Sundays**

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**Minister** | Rev. Martha Munson

**Director of Religious Education** | Rev. Lori Staubitz

**Music Director** | Bryan Holten

**Sexton** | Brandon Fagan

**Nursery Care Provider** | Carol Williams

**Office Administrator** | Kris White

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

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Editor, Weekly *eOutlook*: Kris White; Monthly paper *Our Outlook*, David Damico/Marcy Klein

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