

# Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

April 2013

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**Inside**

Minister's Message	Pg 2
RE News, <i>Gleanings</i>	Pg 2
UU Ministers	Pg 3
Transition Team	Pg 4
Finance Fun...	Pg 4
School 7 News	Pg 5
Stewardship 2013	Pg 5
Ministerial Search	Pg 6
House Report Highlights	Pg 7

## Sunday Services | April 2013

**April 7 | *Ghosts***

Ghosts and specters, walk the halls of First Universalist, and they walk with us more personally, carrying the memories of our lives. Who are these ghosts? Should we even listen to them?

– Rev. Martha Munson



**April 14 |** Guest speaker Dr. Adam Frank, acclaimed book author, NPR commentator, and astrophysics professor at the University of Rochester. The recipient of a Hubble Fellowship, Prof. Frank is an expert on stellar formation. His popular science writings include regular contributions to *Discover* and *Astronomy* magazines, and the books *About Time: Cosmology & Culture at the Twilight of the Big Bang* and *The Constant Fire: Beyond the Science vs. Religion Debate*.

– Michael Scott. Guest speaker, Adam Frank



**April 21 | *Is This a Great Congregation, or What?*** A celebration service about time, talent, and treasure shared.

– Rev. Martha Munson



**April 28 | *Why Do They Call it "Gaming"?***

A service about gambling, the poor, libertarianism, and the state.

– Rev. Martha Munson



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





## Walking With You

*Message from the Interim Minister*

**Stewardship.** What is it? Why do we do it? How much should I give? These are big, important, and good questions. Thank you for asking!

*What is it?* Members and active friends of First Universalist are asked to make a “pledge” of financial support for the upcoming fiscal year (which begins in the summer).

*Why do we do it?* There are multiple reasons why we do it. One is that we are responsible for the livelihoods of staff. It is right/just that we are able to give them new contracts for the year upcoming, and that they should know their wages and benefits, and be able to plan accordingly. Another is that the budget overall (including fixed costs like insurance and utilities) need to be determined in advance. Just like a household budget, the congregation needs to be able to fulfill its obligations, or not, and pare in some areas if there is not enough money to go around. (The congregation – that would be you – approves a budget at an Annual Meeting in June.)

*How much should I/we give?* First Universalist is like no other organization you belong to (unless your family happens to be “mixed” and belong to two congregations). It’s not like the YM or YW, or Planned Parenthood, or the ACLU, or the Nature Conservancy. First Universalist is the place where “everybody knows your name”, where you are counted on, and where you can count on support for trials, tribulations, death, and for life’s celebrations like a wedding or the birth of a child. Herewith I tell you what we do. As in every free church, what you do is up to you.... Dave and I endeavor to tithe (give away 10% of our income, adjusted gross). We understand that we are richly blessed in the context of most of the world, unlike many of the people who live around us. We give 5% to the congregations we respectively participate in. Another 5% gets divided up between secular “causes”. We agree in advance, leaving a little “wobble room” for emergency requests. It’s simple, and it is a stretch. I invite you to pledge what seems like a bit of a stretch to you. With money, as with exercise, a bit of a stretch is good.

First Universalist, “the downtown gem” (as I am wont to call it), is your congregation. Please challenge yourself a bit, especially in this transition time. Unlike the “Y” or any other organization, First Universalist depends on you, and at the same time loves and supports you.

I look forward to seeing you on the corner of S. Clinton and Court. ❖

Faithfully,  
*Martha*



## Gleanings

*from Religious Growth & Learning*

*Submitted by Rev. Lori Staubitz, Consulting Religious Educator*

One Sunday, a few years ago, a wonderful gardener handed me a small brown container after church. It was filled with earth and a single seed.

“Here” he said, “This one is for you.”

“What is it?” I asked. “A beautiful cherry tomato” he replied. Oh boy, just what I love! I said with great enthusiasm.

My future tomato plant was one among many he had grown for our youth to give away at as part of our church community outreach efforts for Earth Day. Before leaving the building he said “ I have to hurry because I don’t want this little seedling to get too cold” and off he went. So there I was with seedling in hand, suddenly filled with the acute realization that I too had a new responsibility. Just like that it happened! With a rush of enthusiasm and the IDEA of lush ripe cherry tomatoes, I leaped to say YES without a moment’s thought. It is like that with those things you just know will be worth the effort. However, now I have it. The full force of saying YES was now in my hands.

It’s like that with seedlings and it is like that with being a supportive member of congregational life.

It takes thoughtful planning, nurture and all around commitment to raise vegetables as well as a vital Lifespan Faith Development program. Labor intensive? Perhaps. However, it sure seems worth it when the harvest comes in! Won’t you join in the experience of cultivating an active ministry in Lifespan Faith Development by engaging as a Sunday Morning Children’s Worship leader or by talking to our newly formed Adult Faith Development Team about your participation. The seeds of success are now in OUR hands. If you need any “growing tips” don’t hesitate to call! ❖

- Rev. Lori Staubitz





# Where do UU Ministers Come From?

*Submitted by Michael Scott*

Where do UU ministers come from? As we begin our second year of interim ministry and our search for a new settled minister, it is natural to wonder about the nature of the professional ministry.

As voluntary members of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), local congregations retain the exclusive right to ordain—to name someone a minister—and to call—to choose who will be their own minister. In the modern world, however, it would be difficult or impossible for us to find and hire a minister if we had to do so alone. Fortunately, the UUA maintains extensive supports for the professional ministry on our behalf. Chief among these supports are the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) and the Office of Transitions (formerly known as Settlement). In addition, the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, an independent membership organization, maintains a strict code of practice and works to advance the UU ministry as a profession and a calling.

While a local congregation can in principle call anyone it wishes as minister, almost all choose to call someone currently in fellowship (good ministerial standing) with the UUA. The Ministerial Fellowship Committee sets the rules for fellowship, subject to the approval of the UUA Board of Trustees, and oversees an exceptionally rigorous process for reviewing candidates and for granting (and, when necessary, withdrawing) fellowship.

Ministerial candidates who wish to receive UUA fellowship must begin with a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent. Historically several theological schools were established for the training of Unitarian or Universalist ministers. Of the five in existence in 1961 (three Unitarian and two Universalist), three survive today. Two are explicitly UU: Meadville-Lombard Theological School (affiliated with the University of Chicago) and Starr King School for the Ministry (part of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA). The third, Harvard Divinity School, is officially non-denominational, but has a centuries-old Unitarian tradition.

About a third of those currently studying for the UU ministry attend one of these three institutions. The rest are scattered across a very large number of other schools, including the local Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, where several UU students have studied in recent years. Our recent settled ministers have been an academically varied group: George Tyger studied at Andover Newton Theological School, an historically Congregationalist seminary in Boston. Sally Hamlin and Beth Banks were graduates of Starr King. Mark and Donna Morrison-Reed were graduates of Meadville-Lombard.

In addition to academic training, candidates for fellowship must have the sponsorship of a UU congregation, and must complete a career assessment program, a year-long internship under the direction of a senior mentor, an intensive unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (ministry in a health-care setting), and an extensive reading list. Finally, they must survive a grueling review before the Ministerial Fellowship committee. Only then do they receive preliminary fellowship, at which point the Transitions Office will assist them in finding a settled pastorate. Preliminary fellowship lasts a minimum of three years, at which point a successful candidate may be promoted to final fellowship with the UUA.

Ministers in fellowship are encouraged, though not required, to join and actively participate in their regional chapter of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association. There is also an association for Retired UU ministers and their partners.

Much more information about the Transitions Office and the settlement process will appear over the course of the coming year; stay tuned! For further information, you can visit the following web sites (scan the QR codes to take you directly to the sites):

[uua.org/directory/staff/ministriesfaith/](http://uua.org/directory/staff/ministriesfaith/)



[uuma.org/](http://uuma.org/) ❖



# Hospitality in Action

*Submitted by Transition Team*

Over the past few months, we've heard about hospitality from the pulpit, the Transition Team, in meetings, and in our Outlook. So with all the "talk," many of us are hungry for some concrete "action" pieces. Clearly, some of the hospitality work will be undertaken by leadership, through the membership committee, coffee hour, and so forth. But the MOST important changes may be the smaller ones that each of us can make to be sure that our congregation is inclusive, warm, and welcoming to visitors:

*Come to church!* When our pews, coffee hour, and activities are full, we project to visitors that our congregation is something worth getting up on Sunday mornings for. We are a vibrant, active community, so help us show it by being present each week.

Before conversing with friends on Sunday, *have a conversation* with someone you don't know as well--including visitors and those who have been with us only a few times. Not sure what to say, or concerned that you might mistake someone for a visitor who has actually been coming around awhile?

Here are some ideas:

*I'm glad you're with us today!*

*What did you think of the sermon?*

*I'm not sure if we've met... I'm \_\_\_\_\_*

*How did you like the music?*

*I'm going to have coffee-- would you like to join me?*

*Share with others why you love this church* and how you are involved. In conversations with others, don't be afraid to talk about why our congregation brings you joy or helps you in life. Our church is like the proverbial light we should not hide under a bushel!

As you are involved in church projects, committees, or activities, *look for ways to involve newer folks*. On a committee? Invite someone to work on your next project with you. Bringing something for coffee hour? Invite someone to bring a treat that same week.

As they say, *little things mean a lot*. Let's keep our doors... and our minds and hearts... open to the possibilities!  
Ann Rhody for the Interim Transition Team: Karl Abbott, chair; Bill Elwell, Mary Louise Gerek, Santosha Kuykendall ❖

# Finance Fun...

*Submitted by Finance Chair Ann Rhody*

The wheels of the finance world have been turning! Here's what's up:

- The stewardship campaign is gearing up, and Stewardship Sunday is April 21 (see related article)
- The transfer of our banking relationship from Bank of America to Canandaigua National Bank is almost complete.
- We are developing the 2013-14 budget based on input from church members and leaders.
- We are dealing with financial good news (very successful fundraisers this year!) and bad news (spending way more than we'd hoped on heat...).
- Finally, a reminder that you can remember the church in your will! A simple way of "remembering the Church" is through beneficiary designation on your IRA, retirement plan, or life insurance policy. This doesn't require a lawyer and may be changed whenever you wish. You can make the church a partial or total beneficiary on any fund, so check it out!

For more information on any finance matter, please contact Treasurer Laretta Young or Finance Chair Ann Rhody. ❖

# Donations for School 7

*Submitted by Sarah Singal*

We have a list of what School 7 could use right now, provided by the social worker, Ms. Turner: socks, boys underwear, girls underwear, and jeans, sizes 6,7,8 and 10 about six back packs--they have none for boys and only one left for girls, and the need is constant.

We will also be giving money for field trips in the spring.

We have \$50 from this year's budget, an ongoing back pack fund, and will have a social justice plate offering in April. Save receipts to be reimbursed. Forms are in the bookkeepers' mail box in the volunteer office. We could use buyers for the items to be purchased. And if you would just like to donate items without being reimbursed, that's fine, too. Thank you!! These items are all needed and the gifts are very much appreciated! ❖

# Stewardship 2013

Love Will Guide Us

*Submitted by Ann Rhody*

If you cannot sing like angels, if you cannot speak before thousands, you can give from deep within you, you can change the world with your love...

Change the world with our love... isn't that really what we are trying to do here at First Universalist? We cultivate love in our congregation and carry it out to the world to "live our religion." Our stewardship campaign gives us an opportunity to "give from deep within" towards this effort.

## Your stewardship checklist:

- ✓ Watch our stewardship 2013 video on the church website, [uuroc.org](http://uuroc.org)
- ✓ Read our stewardship letter and brochure you'll be receiving in the mail.
- ✓ If you are less familiar with stewardship at our church, plan to attend our brief "UU Money 101" session after church on April 7.
- ✓ Fill out your pledge card, send or bring it to church.
- ✓ Be with us on Stewardship Sunday, April 21 for cake and celebration after the service!

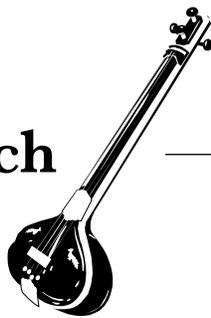


We all know that 2013-14 will be a pivotal year for our congregation. Love Will Guide Us as we prepare to call a settled minister to help us forge our way into a beautiful future. Please give generously as you pledge your support for 2013-14! ❖

## LUUnch BUUnch

*Submitted by Connie Valk*

The LUUnch BUUnch will gather on Sunday, April 28 at *India House*, 998 Clinton Avenue South, for their scrumptious buffet at noon after the service. There are plenty of choices for vegetarians as well as omnivores. All are welcome! ❖



# A Volunteer, on RAIHN\*



*Submitted by Marti Eggers*

"I have volunteered each time that First Universalist has hosted RAIHN families, and I'll confess that I was nervous the first time. I also confess that more than once I wondered on the day I was to volunteer why I had signed up. I was tired; it would be so nice to just stay home and relax. But when I leave this place at the end of my volunteer shift, I am enriched and energized by the experience and by the gracious and hope-filled guests I have been privileged to meet and break bread with."

You, too, can nurture the spirit, serve the community and be a source of hope for homeless families by becoming a RAIHN volunteer. Here's how –

**Training** – On Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup> at Church of the Transfiguration in Fairport, Nancy Elliott, RAIHN Director, will lead a training session that will orient attendees to the philosophy of RAIHN and provide skills in building appropriate relationships with our guests. Ample time is provided for questions and discussion. You will then be prepared to volunteer, including for a shift at the end of our Host Week that begins on May 12<sup>th</sup> and for subsequent Host Weeks.

**Hosting** – Our next Host Week begins on Sunday, May 12<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to see how RAIHN works by shadowing a volunteer, please contact Chris DeGolier, [chrisdeg@frontiernet.net](mailto:chrisdeg@frontiernet.net). If you have questions, please see Sarah Singal or Marti Eggers. Thank you!

\* RAIHN, the Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network, is a consortium of 14 faith communities that host families in temporary need of housing, and 25 faith communities that provide volunteers and other support to the host congregations. First Universalist is a host congregation, supported by St. Mary's. Four times a year, for a week each time, volunteers from both congregations work together to provide a welcoming, safe place for these 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, April Schedule

*Submitted by Phil Ebersole*

Drop-in discussions are held each Sunday in the adult lounge on the second floor of our church. Sometimes our discussions are based on certain books or articles, but you don't have to read anything or do any advance preparation to participate. Just drop in. People of all viewpoints are welcome to make presentations or join in the discussions. Our discussions are held each Sunday at 9:15 a.m., preceding the Sunday service. Here is the schedule.

## **April 7** | *Getting our Affairs in Order*

One of the most generous things we can do for our families is to plan what we would like to have happen after we die. Death will catch up to each of us sooner or later, but it shouldn't catch us without a will. Hank Stone will discuss his preparations, and invites everyone's stories.

## **April 14** | *Expectations*

"On a recent vacation to Toronto, there were several instances where I was disappointed over a number of things ranging from costs to inadequate services," David Damico said. "On reflection, my frustration was the result of my expectations caused either from lack of knowledge or poor planning. This is something I'd like to avoid in the future. In this discussion, I'd like to address expectations and how we deal with disappointment. Can adequate foresight lead to a more settled mind?"

## **April 21** | *Remember Haiti?*

The country has faded from the headlines and TV screens since the 2010 earthquake, but its people are still struggling. Shirley Bond will review a new book, *Farewell, Fred Voodoo: A Letter from Haiti* by Amy Wilentz, an outstanding researcher who has lived there, and lead a discussion of Haiti and its proud people.

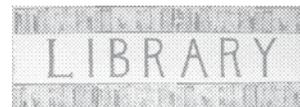
## **April 28** | *War Zone Faith*

The Rev. George Tyger, former minister of First Universalist Church, has written a book about his experiences and reflections as an Army chaplain in Afghanistan. Phil Ebersole will review the book and lead a discussion.

Topics are subject to change. For updates, check the bulletin board in First Universalist Church's Clara Barton lounge or the Schedule of Drop-In Discussions on <http://philebersole.wordpress.com>. ❖

# Library News

*Submitted by Keith Stott*



Speak ill of "true" religion in the nineteenth century and you would be condemned, arrested, tried, and jailed. That is what happened to Universalist minister Abner Kneeland when, among other things, he denied validity of resurrection of the dead, a god, miracles, and the divinity of Christ. Should we feel safer in this century? Probably, but in Massachusetts that law is still on the books! For a gripping story of religious controversy in the early nineteenth century, read *The Last Man Jailed For Blasphemy* by Stephan Papa with foreword by William F. Schulz. Call number is 921 K. ❖

## Calling all members: we need your input!

*Submitted by John D. Wellin*

Chair, 2012-2013 Board of Trustees

The ministerial search process that will find our next settled minister is about to begin. The first step in this process is the selection of a Ministerial Search Committee, which will consist of seven highly motivated, dedicated, and trusted members of our church community. The selection of this committee depends on you: members of the Board of Trustees will be making calls to every member starting in the second week of April to get your opinion on whom you would recommend for the job. From the resulting list, a slate of candidates will be identified, and the entire congregation will vote on this slate to select the final set of representatives who will find our next minister.

Consider these qualities when making your recommendations: the best people will work well with others; will represent and serve the entire congregation well, without any axes to grind; will understand the culture and history of the congregation, whether relatively new or a long-standing member; will be or have been active in the congregation and have demonstrated both responsible participation and responsible leadership; are capable of using email and online resources efficiently for communication; are aware of the congregations strengths and weaknesses, but are optimistic about our potential; and, above all, are someone you trust to represent the congregation in this process. We look forward to your input and ongoing attention in these exciting times! ❖

# House Report Highlights - April 2013

*Submitted by Alain Perregaux*

## **Renovation Preamble**

On Sunday March 31<sup>st</sup>, please come to church and enjoy a wonderful Easter service but don't rush off too fast for an Easter egg hunt. March 31<sup>st</sup> is also Sanctuary moving day: the day before the pews and floor renovation begins. There will be ways you can help, and Reverend Martha will lead you through it. Among other things, there will be cushions to store in the balconies, various pieces of furniture to take elsewhere, some of them heavy. If we have a large enough number of volunteers it won't take long. Please join the Renovation Committee and Friends of the "Services in the Lounge" Team (not to be called a committee--just ask Karl). In the weeks ahead there will be many details to attend to and there may be some rough spots. Please bear with us. It's an adventure and we know that Beryl Haas will be smiling when the renovation work is complete.

## **Sanctuary Renovation**

1. *Electrical.* The electrical work did begin on Monday February 25 as planned. The company Landmark Electric was selected for this part of the renovation. The first priority was to bring power and control lines to the locations where the new lights will be mounted in the sanctuary, i.e. above the balconies. This work is nearly complete. The next step will be the installation of the fire detection system in the whole building. It will be made of smoke and heat detectors throughout, even in the attic; manual alarms, strobe lights and horns near the exits; and finally a main control panel in the Court Street entrance. At this time, only a portion of the full alarm system (as required by code) will be installed because of budget constraints. It will be called "Phase 1". Phases 2 and 3 will be done in subsequent years.

2. *Pews and floor.* This particular part of the renovation is due to begin on Monday April 1<sup>st</sup>. Unlike the electrical work, which most people did not notice, the repair of the pews and floor will cause major disruptions.

- The Sunday services will be conducted in the Clara Barton Lounge. A special ad hoc team is organizing this transition.
- The Thursday noon concerts will also take place in the Lounge.
- The parking lot will be closed to renters. During working hours (7:00 AM to 5:00 PM) the larger

part of the lot, on the south side, will be reserved for the contractors; the 5 (or so) spots closest to Court Street will be reserved for church staff and visitors. Church members who wish to park there during working hours will need to use good judgment whether it is safe to park in spots that are left unused. In evenings and on weekends, parking will be available to church members as usual.

On Sunday March 31<sup>st</sup>, everything that is not tied to the floor will have to be removed from the sanctuary after the service. Plans are in development for this major move.

## **Routine Maintenance**

The inspection of the elevator, which was due on February 28, was done in January.

The central parking lot light, which is supposed to come on automatically at dusk, refuses to operate. It works for a few days after each repair, then it quits. The problem appears to be with the contact between the socket and the bulb. It is yet another mystery. Because the other two lights are working correctly, it is not an emergency at the moment.

In the week of March 11, Marty Vyverberg and John Morgan attempted to bleed the air from the water radiators. When they reached the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, they discovered that neither air nor water came out of the bleed valves. It meant that the water pressure was below normal. On Thursday March 14, Dave Hines from W.P. Taillie came and fixed the pressure controlling mechanism in the boiler room. One open question is whether this malfunction had anything to do with our steam consumption problem.

## **Steam Consumption**

We still do not know what causes the unusually high steam consumption. There is a chance that the water pressure problem could be one component of it. We shall see. Another curious and trivial discovery made during the water pressure repair is that many of our water radiators are full of dust that can reduce significantly the efficiency of the heat exchange between the radiators and the ambient air. Even though it would make sense to remedy this situation (12 years of dust would deserve to be removed), it doesn't explain why the steam consumption went up dramatically two years ago. ❖

## **First Universalist Church**

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Rochester, NY 14604

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# **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 McCarty White

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

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