



Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

MINISTER

Rev. Lane-Maired Campbell
minister@uuroc.org

MINISTER OF LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Rev. Michelle Yates
edu@uuroc.org
(585) 310-2484

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Dr. Brock Tjosvold
music@uuroc.org

OFFICE MANAGER

Emma Barry
office@uuroc.org



First Universalist
Church of Rochester

150 South Clinton Ave
Rochester, NY 14604
585-546-2826
uuroc.org

Inside	Page
Rev. Lane-Maired	2
Rev. Michelle Yates	2
Finance News	3
Stewardship	3
Membership	3
Drop-In Discussion	4
MOCHA News	4
Article 2	4
Housing For All	5
Eastman at Wash. Square	5
F.I.R.E.	5
Library News	6
Nominating Committee	6
SJP: BLUU, EcoJustice	7

Sunday Services | February 2024

February 4 | *The Gifts of Softness*

One definition of softness is "having a pleasing quality involving a subtle effect or contrast rather than sharp definition." Another definition refers to being easy to mold. What gifts can these qualities bring to our lives? How can we embrace more softness in our days?

— *Rev. Lane-Maired Campbell*

February 11 | *Love as a Choice and an Act*

M. Scott Peck refers to love as being a choice we make to want for another person's spiritual growth. Let us explore what this choice means within oneself, with a partner or partners, with a community, and with our world. On this Sunday closest to Valentine's Day, let us remember that love is both a choice and an action.

— *Rev. Lane-Maired Campbell*

February 18 | *Welcoming Softness*

As a church community, softness has a lot to teach us about welcoming in new people, new ideas, and creative energy. As the Membership Team leads a listening session after the service about why First Universalist wants to grow, let us remain soft to those who are making their way through the front door.

— *Rev. Lane-Maired Campbell*

February 25 | *The Art of Bouncing Back: A Journey of Resilience and Faith*

Mr. Smith is currently responsible for Nativity Preparatory Academy's operations and its graduate support program. His focus for the past 22 years has been on development, mentorship, education, and empowerment for youth and families. He also serves as ViceChair for House of Mercy, and is a lifelong resident of the Rochester region.

— *James Smith*

❖ **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. ❖



Staying Soft as a Congregational Practice

*A Message from
Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell*

There have been many times in my life when I have chosen to seek community. Looking for connections, seeking people to be around, and even life circumstances have brought me to the front doors of many community spaces. I can remember times when I arrived and it felt like folks had prepared for me. Times when people shared in ways that welcomed a new person, times when people were excited to see someone new. And I can remember times when the welcome was not so warm—when it felt I needed to prove I was a certain way in order to belong, when people were not ready for my presence, when it was clear folks had to put out an extra chair at the table and it was inconvenient. I can imagine you have had this mixture of experiences too.

As our area Unitarian Universalist congregations continue to explore Staying Soft, I am thinking about softness as a community practice. I am thinking about intentional welcome, about how to remain open to new folks coming in. Very practically speaking, First Universalist remains soft as a community when we keep our services accessible online, when we focus our welcome on our front door, when we are regularly attentive to our social media and website, and when we invite people to join in what the church has going on.

The hardest thing is to arrive to a community and find they are not soft, not open to your being there. It is challenging to make one's way all the way to church and to find there is not a role for them here or to find that getting connected is a challenge. As we seek to remain soft, we must look at the barriers to participation First Universalist has built, we must look at how accessible our programs, activities, and even our building are.

May this church remain soft. And may we seek even more softness as we continue to nurture the spirit and serve the community.

In Faith and Courage,
Rev. Lane-Mairead ❖



Lessons from Medusa on Staying Soft

*A Message from
Rev. Michelle Yates*

The story of Medusa tells us of a beautiful woman. Poseidon took an interest in her and, in Greek god fashion, took advantage of her in the temple of Athena. The original story says that Athena was so offended that she cursed Medusa with snakes for hair and that anyone who looked at her would be turned to stone.

That sounds like grounding for a victim-blaming culture to me. But one feminist interpretation of the myth suggests that Athena's curse was actually a gift to Medusa. That Athena gifted Medusa with the power to defend herself from future attacks.

I've been stuck on this image of Medusa ever since I heard of our worship theme of "Staying Soft" during the season of everything being frozen. While I really like the new interpretation of Medusa having the ability to defend herself from further abuse, I also see her as still being stuck, petrified, or frozen herself. Stuck in a place of anger and fear. Because she is unable to choose who or when to use her powers, she is unable to heal or have companions. I think for Medusa, "Staying Soft" means healing. Working towards having healthy relationships built on trust.

We all will be hurt to varying degrees in this life. We will develop coping mechanisms to protect us from further harm. Ideally, we will also heal so we know when and how to protect ourselves, and not become hard and frozen, denying ourselves the ability to grow.

When new people come to our church, they are longing for belonging; a place to feel connected and safe to grow. As with all relationships, we may unearth or bump into old wounds that are hard as stone and have built-in security systems. Let us stay open and curious about defensiveness, as it tells us a story about someone who has been hurt. It tells us about a place in ourselves that with some care and healing might be able to soften. A part of us once frozen in stone that might be recovered to living flesh. A part of us once isolated that might be re-membered into beloved community.

Yours in the Journey,
Rev. Michelle ❖



Finance News

Submitted by Ann Rhody, Finance Chair

Thank you.....

Your generous offerings for staff bonuses allowed each of our staff members to receive a meaningful bonus with which to start 2024. It means a great deal to our staff to know how much they are appreciated!

The special Christmas Eve offering for the Minister's Discretionary Fund brought in over \$800! Your generosity will enable our Minister to assist people in need within our congregation and the wider community.

Finance Happenings.....

Our 2024 Service Auction, slated for February 4, is in process as of this writing—we are hoping for some fun, lots of connections, and funds to support our church's mission! See uuroc.org for details.

The 2024 Stewardship Campaign, "Love Calls Us On," is being planned now. Save the date of March 24, 2024 after the service for a church-wide Stewardship event!

Success to celebrate.....

This year's Ministerial Sabbatical has come and gone. Not only was it a success from a Worship and Leadership standpoint, but it was a financial success as well! We were able to cover all of the expenses from the Sabbatical Reserve fund established last year, and we even have enough left in that fund to seed the next Sabbatical, whenever that may come. Well done, everyone! ❖



Stewardship: Save The Dates!

Submitted by Theo & Steve Munson, Stewardship Co-chairs

It's the new year, and with that come thoughts of spring! In our church calendar, that is the season of Stewardship! There are two important Stewardship events planned for this spring:

After the **March 24 service** there will be a one-time Stewardship Gathering. We will exchange ideas on how we can use our shared financial resources to move our church's vision forward. This will be an important opportunity to update knowledge about church finances and to exchange ideas about how *Love is Calling Us On* toward our church's future.

The second date is **Stewardship Sunday on April 14!** You will want to be here for the celebration of our Stewardship success with our tradition of enjoying the "Fiscal Pies." See you then! ❖



Membership Committee: Listening Session!

Submitted by Donna Anderson & Clinton Swingle

In preparation for our growth initiative, the Membership Committee is going to conduct a listening session on February 18 after the service. Your input is needed! This session will help us prepare for the membership consultant. Three questions that will be discussed are:

- What does our church offer new members?
- How are we willing to change to help our membership grow?
- Why do we want to grow? ❖

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 about in-church drop-in discussions. Contact DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org for the link, or look on uuroc.org! Sometimes discussions are based on books/articles, but you don't have to do any prep to participate. Just drop in!

Sunday, February 4 | What This Country Needs Is... *In-Person*

Suppose you were running for President and were certain to be elected. What would your platform be? Ignore the present candidates. What do you think the country actually needs? Phil Ebersole will lead the discussion in the Chalice Room at 9:15am.

February 6 | Universal Character of the Hebrew Bible

While many of us know the Hebrew Bible to contain legal commands, statutes, and judgments, its universal character and echoes of other religious ideas are lesser known. However a brief review of its legal codes, mythic narratives, and structure will reveal ideals that are found beyond the confessional walls of the synagogue. Our guest presenter is Daniel Chadwick, online professor of Religious Studies.

February 13 | Rev. Lane-Mairead Series—Staying Soft

Brené Brown writes about having a strong back, soft front, and wild heart in order to live vulnerably and authentically. How do we maintain softness? How do we embrace softness as a gift?

February 20 | Equity Issues: One Eye In & One Eye Out

Melissa Parrish will lead a discussion on issues of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, disability, intersectionality, and other forms of social location. In order to be a more equitable and inclusive community, we will be asked to reflect on and discuss our personal, societal, and institutional assumptions, practices, and beliefs regarding equity and social justice issues.

February 27 | Open Topic—Possible Future Topics?!

John Lukes will lead an open-topic discussion, starting with a request for suggestions for possible future topics (and presenters), and then let's see where we go from there!

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



From MOCHA

Submitted by Nancy Gaede

The time has come for this MOCHA team to retire! We will need folks to step forward willing to organize our congregation's coffee hour hospitality.

The duties of MOCHA include such things as: developing/managing a budget, buying supplies, signing folks up to set up/host/clean up, sending reminders, and directions.

We would suggest finding several people to work in a team to split up the responsibilities. We will develop and submit the budget for the next church year. I will gladly meet with any interested people to talk about how we've been doing coffee hour, and will also (if you wish) be happy to work with you during the next year as you learn the ropes.

We will serve through the end of this church year (June 2024). It has been a joy to provide this service to our church community!

In Faith, Nancy Gaede (on behalf of Karl Abbott and Kitty Forbush, MOCHA team) ❖

Article 2: What Are Our UU Values and Why Are We Getting Rid of the Principles?!?!

Submitted by Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell

The UUA has been working for the past three years on a statement of our shared UU values, held in Article 2 of the UUA bylaws. A change is coming to Unitarian Universalism that would remove the 7 Principles from the bylaws and replace them with stated values that are shared in Unitarian Universalism. As a vote will come before General Assembly this June, Rev. Lane-Mairead and Rev. Michelle will be leading a workshop on Saturday, Feb. 10, from 10-11:30am so you can learn more. Please join in the discussion online or in-person! ❖



F.I.R.E News: *Book Time!*

Submitted by Theo Munson

Plan to stop by the F.I.R.E. team table during the month of February to get your FREE book! A variety of books on Racial Equity will be available for the entire month to take, read and share. It's one of the ways we can move the needle toward justice. ❖

“In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist. We must be anti-racist.”

— Angela Davis

Eastman at Washington Square Concerts

Concerts are held at our church at midday on Thursdays. Each concert begins at 12:15pm and ends at approximately 12:45pm. Admission is free!

- **Feb. 1 | Cello and Brass Duo**

RPO principal cellist, Ahrim Kim, and RPO principal bassist, Cory Palmer, perform works by Rossini, Barriere, and Dragonetti.

- **Feb. 8 | Luna Piano Trio**

Join us for some beautiful chamber music performed by Eastman students Jaewon Jun, violin, Taylor Yoon, cello, and Karina Tseng, piano.

- **Feb. 15 | Lunchtime with Ludwig**

Come and enjoy Beethoven's works for violin and piano performed by violinist Claire An and pianist Irina Lupines.

- **Feb. 22 | Piano Fireworks I**

Featuring students from the piano studios of Professors Lomazov and Rackers.

- **Feb. 29 | Piano Fireworks II**

Featuring students from the piano studios of Professors Lomazov and Rackers. ❖



Housing for All News

Submitted by Chris DeGolyer

Free Breakfast for Houseless on February 29

On Thursday morning, February 29, from 10 to 11:45am, the *Homeless Outreach Team* (H.O.T.) will offer a free breakfast in the Clara Barton Lounge. The breakfast will include coffee, doughnuts, bagels, and more! Staff of various agencies that provide shelter, substance abuse treatment, and other services will be on hand to talk with people and offer help. H.O.T. is a collaboration of the agencies, the Rochester Police Department, and faith-based organizations. Please consider volunteering to help set up, serve, and clean up. This is a good opportunity to meet and talk with houseless folks in our community. Thanks go to Elizabeth Osta and Bill Schubmehl for their work in planning this event. To volunteer, contact Elizabeth Osta at fire@uuroc.org.



Family Promise (FPGROC) News

With its prevention, diversion, and apartment shelter programs, *Family Promise* helped over 120 families in 2023. This is twice as many as they helped when the program was limited to shelter in the churches. Thanks to everybody who donated to help make this happen! FPGROC is in the process of buying (for a very low price) two buildings across the street from the office on Webster Avenue. The apartments will require some renovations—a future volunteer opportunity! This will increase the number of apartments that *Family Promise* can use to shelter families while they search for a more permanent home. ❖



Library Update!

Submitted by Marcy Klein, for the Library Committee

New Open Hours

The church library/bookstore will be open during Coffee Hour after the Sunday services only the first Sunday of every month. It will be closed the whole month of February, since the first Sunday of that month is the Service Auction. However, the pamphlets and the free magazines in the rack by the ramp are available all the time, even when the library/bookstore is closed.

During open hours, members and guests are welcome to browse the library and borrow books, or to buy any of the old or new books on the tables and freestanding shelves. As a reminder, the books may be borrowed by members and anyone who has attended long enough to have a permanent name tag. The used books can be bought for whatever amount you wish to pay, and new books for half the list price. Please have exact change, or checks made out to the church.

Upcoming Sales

The bookstore will have three “super-sales” this year during Sunday Coffee Hour—March 3, June 2 and December 1! You will be able to buy a bag of books for only \$1. What a deal! This will help us free up space to display more donated books. The bookstore will have plenty of bags available.

Children’s Books

The bookstore also offers a wide variety of used children’s books that are free for the taking. They are located in the bookcase in the children’s corner of the Clara Barton Lounge. Please help yourself!

“Gender Studies” Display

The Library Committee will set up a special area to display books from its collection that deal with gender identity and sexual orientation. You will find the new display on top of the bookcases at the back of the library. Be sure to take a look, and feel free to sign out any that interest you. ❖

Nominating Committee: Opportunities for Service

Submitted by Richard Reed

The Nominating Committee is looking for you! There are several opportunities for you to serve our church beginning July 1, 2024. The following positions are open:

- Two 3-year terms on the Board of Trustees
- Two 3-year terms on the Committee on Ministry
- One 2-year term on the Nominating Committee

Please step forward to provide your ideas and input in one of these exciting areas. If you are interested and would like further information, please email nomcom@uuroc.org or contact one of the following people: Janus Mary Jones, Paula Marchese, Micki Toker, Dwight Montague, Nancy Gaede or Richard Reed. ❖



Superbowl Sunday: Silent Movie!

Submitted by Connie Valk and Donna Anderson

Perhaps you’re not of those folks who loves the Super Bowl or, maybe you’re a fan who wants to join us pre-football!

On Feb. 11 join us for brunch at the South Wedge Diner (880 S. Clinton Ave) at 12:30pm, and then at 2pm to attend the silent film “The Black Pirate” at the West Herr Auditorium Theatre (885 E. Main St.). The movie stars Douglas Fairbanks with organ accompaniment by Mark Herman. Admission is \$15. Email membership_com@uuroc.org to reserve a seat at the brunch table!

There’s plenty of parking behind the auditorium. Need a ride? Want to car pool? Let us know one week ahead of time! ❖

Social Justice Plate: *January Offering*

Submitted by Joy Leccese

Our January Social Justice Plate offering was donated to BLUU.



According to the BLUU website: The *Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism Organizing Collective Board* (BLUU OCB) is a group of people that came together out of a need for spiritual connection and commitment to creating a more just and loving world for Black people.



In six years, BLUU has transformed from a small, informal gathering of Black UUs into an impactful 501(c)(3) organization that creates life-giving and life-saving opportunities for spiritual community and Black-centered organizing. Since its founding, BLUU has hosted a symposium centering Black UU theology, established a popular virtual worship space for Black people; organized UU congregations to donate and organize for bailout funds; and started a



vibrant youth ministry.

BLUU also just launched BLUU Havens, which will give Black folks opportunities to socialize, organize with, and spiritually grow with other Black people, especially Black UUs, in their local communities.

For more information, see their website: blacklivesuu.org/our-story. ✦

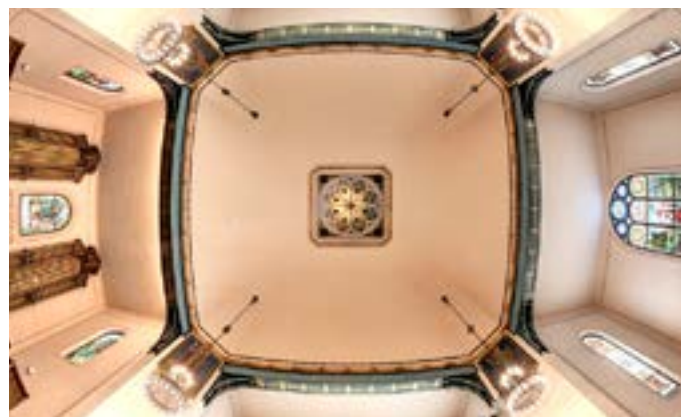


EcoJustice: *Some Dates Coming Up!*

Submitted by Sarah Singal

See you at the church auction, **February 4!** If you've never experienced the good old-fashioned in-person auction, or if you're an old pro, you're in for a lot of fun! And don't forget to bid on a festive feast from collaborating Animal Ministry and EcoJustice Group, aka EcoJam. Clear your calendar for dinner on Friday, May 3, and keep bidding.

Earth Day is April 22! Interfaith Impact's theme for 2024's Faith Climate Action Week is "*Common Ground: Cultivating Connections between our Faith, our Food, and our Climate.*" And a local group, Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee/Finger Lakes, will host a climate summit concerning Health and Equity in Action on April 20 and 21. It's a topic of special concern to UUs. Why not come and see what it's all about? ✦





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.

**Worship service begins at 10:30am on
Sundays**

Minister | Rev. Lane-Maired Campbell

Minister of Lifespan Faith Development |
Rev. Michelle Yates

Music Director | Dr. Brock Tjosvold

Office Manager | Emma Barry

Nursery Care Provider | Carol Williams

BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2023–2024

Clinton Swingle (*Pres.*), Bridget Watts (*Vice-Pres.*)
Jim Milch (*Clerk*), Shelley Adams, Theresa
McFarland-Porter, Heather Jones, and Richard
Reed

Editor, monthly newsletter, *Our Outlook*, & *This
Week at First Universalist* (digital): Emma Barry

More info is available on our website: uuroc.org

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