

Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

January 2014

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Our Outlook

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Sunday Services | January 2014

January 5: *Fire Communion Service*

Join us the first Sunday in January for our annual Fire Communion Service. This service is a time of reflection about the year that has passed and a time of renewal for the new year that we are entering.
– Patti Goodwin, Tom Williams



January 12 | See *Walking With You* column.
– Rev. Martha Munson



January 19 | See *Walking With You* column.
– Rev. Martha Munson



January 26 | See *Walking With You* column.
– Rev. Martha Munson



*If the Rochester Schools are closed, the church office is closed.
Sunday Service cancellations will appear on Channel 13.*

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





Walking With You

Message from the Interim Minister, Martha Munson

Well, a year's a year. We've all seen many come and many go, personally and in the life of First Universalist. And yet, and yet, 2014 will be a major transition. Like any new year, we cannot see it fully yet. Who will be your new minister? Will there be a good Candidate? What will happen in the months between now and then? As for me, I hope that we will, together, put the months to good use! Since the moment I became your interim minister, I've understood that my task is to help you to position yourselves strongly to call your next settled minister. I have done, and will continue to do, my best to help you toward that goal. You are a wonderful congregation in many ways. You are UUism's Downtown gem. Who are you, then? Who is your natural constituency? Do you want to invite people moving into condos along the river (30/40-somethings and downsizing retirees). Or some other cohort? These are very important questions, which only you can answer.

I wish you bright holidays, and Peace in this New Year of 2014.

Happily walking with you.

Faithfully, *Martha* ❖

Oh, What a Tangled Web...

Submitted by Nancy Gaede

In January, **Membership** is planning to try to get the nametag boards tidied up. We will be putting the nametags, one section at a time on succeeding Sundays, on tables in the lounge. Please locate yours before service and return it neatly to the board after service/ coffee hour. Wrapping the string around the tag or tucking it inside the plastic sleeve might help keep tags in place and easier to read. Thank you for your help with this task. ❖



Gleanings

Rev. Lori Staubitz, Director of Religious Education

Adlai Stevenson wrote:

“I think that one of our most important tasks is to convince others that there's nothing to fear in difference; that difference, in fact, is one of the healthiest and most invigorating of human characteristics without which life would become meaningless. Here lies the power of the liberal way: not in making the whole world Unitarian [Universalist], but in helping ourselves and others to see some of the possibilities inherent in viewpoints other than one's own; in encouraging the free interchange of ideas; in welcoming fresh approaches to the problems of life; in urging the fullest, most vigorous use of critical self-examination.”

From *Wisdom Quotes: Quotations to inspire and challenge*
- by Jone Johnson Lewis

I think of these words in relationship to an ongoing search for truth and meaning. It is interesting how many adults develop a philosophical or religious perspective and stand on it for the remainder of their lives. One of the hallmarks of Unitarian Universalism is the understanding that “we do not stand...we move”, that we consider ourselves forever on a quest for greater understanding, meaning, purpose and action. As we move into yet another new year, I invite you to consider your own religious perspective. How long has it been since you stretched to exercised your faith, put it to the test or stretched a bit outside your “conformant” zone? This winter we have adult offerings which invite bending and stretching.

Come join in creative dialog as together we delve into some challenging theological perspectives from portions of Henry Nelson Wieman's book, *The Source of Human Good* and venture into uncharted territories in February with our exploration of spiritual exercises. Four copies of this book are available for loan. Please sign up in the Clara Barton Lounge or contact me at DRE@uuroc.org.

Happy New Year! -Lori ❖





Murray Grove



Submitted by Michael Scott

Of the many Unitarian Universalist camp, conference, and retreat centers, Murray Grove is certainly one of the oldest and most historic. Unlike many, it can be reached in a comfortable day's drive from Rochester.

Many readers are probably familiar with the "miracle story" of John Murray. Trained as a Methodist minister and then converted to universalism in England, Murray emigrated to the New World in the wake of personal tragedy, vowing never to preach again. Blown off course and grounded on a sandbar, his ship deposited him in Good Luck, New Jersey, in September of 1770. There he met Thomas Potter, an illiterate but prosperous farmer, who had already built himself a chapel, convinced that God would send him a preacher to declare the good news of universal salvation. Murray took some persuading—among other things, by a wind that refused to let him off the sandbar—but eventually he came around, preaching in Potter's chapel, founding churches all up and down the East Coast, and coming to be known as the "Father of Universalism in America."

After Potter's death in 1777—just a few years after Murray's landing—the farm passed into other hands, but it was repurchased, bit by bit, by Universalists in the mid 19th Century. The original chapel, which had fallen into disrepair, was rebuilt in the 1870s. A memorial gravestone for Potter was erected next to the chapel in

1883, a larger church was built nearby in 1885, and the Murray Grove Association, established to care for the site, was chartered in 1886.

With the addition of a hotel, Murray Grove became a major site for retreats and pilgrimages through the first half of the 20th century. A disastrous fire destroyed the hotel in 1955, and it was replaced by a cluster of smaller buildings. A second fire destroyed the church in 1973, and the Grove fell upon hard times. It almost folded in 1991, but was saved by an innovative land deal: 200 acres were sold to the US Interior Department to expand the Edwin B. Forsythe Wildlife Refuge. Concluded in 1995, the deal provided the Grove with an endowment that supplies roughly half its operating income; the rest comes from retreats, donations, fundraisers, and grants.

Today the Murray Grove Retreat and Renewal Center hosts gatherings year-round for a variety of groups, about half of them UU. It has 20 acres of land with half a dozen buildings, and accommodations for roughly 40 guests. There is a salt-water pool, a campfire circle, a labyrinth, an extensive collection of historical materials, and a small Universalist cemetery. Immediately to the north (literally, just a few feet away) is the Good Hope town cemetery, with Potter's grave and the 1870s chapel, which has been kept in good repair. The site of Potter's home (long gone at this point) is a half mile to the east, in the wildlife preserve, to which visitors also have access.

Hurricane Sandy caused considerable damage in October of 2012, but not as much as it did to many properties nearby. Once power was restored, the Grove was able to provide emergency housing for recovery workers and displaced persons.

Visit murraygrove.org to learn more. ❖

2020 is The 250th Anniversary of UNIVERSALISM IN AMERICA

- Love With No Exceptions -

A **visioning meeting** to shape this celebration is being held at Murray Grove February 28–March 2, 2014.

Wanted:

All who have ideas for how to celebrate, promote Universalism for our time.



John Murray



Contact:

Carol Haag

RevCarolH@verizon.net

Murray Grove

murraygrove@murraygrove.org

Winter Offerings for Adults Lifespan Faith Development

The Source of Human Good

by Henry Nelson Wieman;

Facilitated by Rev. Lori Staubitz, Director of Faith Development

Wednesdays, January 8th, 15th and 22nd.

Life, Death and all that comes between... If you would like to explore some of the deeper questions of the human spirit with others in a safe and supportive group, come join us for three evenings as we delve into *The Source of Human Good* by Henry Nelson Wieman. As a liberal Unitarian theologian, Wieman searched for a natural way to think about the source of creation, goodness and evil in the world. We hope you will come prepared to expand on your own theology in relationship to some of Wieman's findings. Reading the book is optional but we ask that you plan to attend all three sessions.

Please R.S.V.P. to reserve your place.

No fees required.

Contact Rev. Lori Staubitz at DRE@uuroc.org;

Call the church office (585) 546-2826

or sign up in the Clara Barton Lounge on or before December 27th.

Journey from Religion to Spirituality

Rev. Lori Staubitz; Director of Faith Development



**Wednesdays February 5th, 12th and 19th;
6:30-8:30pm.**

Have you ever considered yourself "spiritual" but not really "religious"? If so, you are in good company. But what does it really mean to be spiritual? What are some of the thoughts, feelings and actions related to leading a spiritual life?

We will explore the topic through readings, personal reflections and some tried and true spiritual practices including journaling, meditation and active listening.

Please R.S.V.P. to reserve your place.

No fees required.

Contact Rev. Lori Staubitz at DRE@uuroc.org;

Call the church office (585) 546-2826

or sign up in the Clara Barton Lounge on or before January 27th, 2014. ❖

Transition Work - *So Happy Together*

Relationship experts report that the most satisfying marriages are NOT the ones where there is little conflict, but those in which conflict exists and is processed in a healthy way.

One observation Martha has made about us during her time here is that we are "conflict-averse." There is a real reluctance to deal with conflict here... many times we just wish it would go away or wait for it to blow over. Maybe we silently steam about something that's bothering us, or worse yet, grouse to one another instead of talking directly to the person or group involved.

Why are we conflict averse? Some possible reasons:

- We fear that conflict will cause damage to our church community
- We worry that, in our small church, we can't afford to lose members if someone gets angry
- We want to be nice, and are concerned that if we confront a problem we'll be perceived as negative

But conflict is inevitable in community, or in any relationship. Indeed, during my nearly 30 years of membership in this church, I have seen many conflicts come and go, some small and some much more serious. I have seen the results of healthy conflict resolution, and felt the pain of those not handled so well.

During the next few months, Martha will be assisting us with some tips for healthy conflict resolution. Here are some starting thoughts:

- Generally speaking, dialogue is the answer. If we can talk to one another, and listen compassionately, most things can be worked out.
- Conflict is best handled face to face and person to person, rather than electronically (I know of a number of situations which got very ugly and out-of-hand once e-mail was involved).
- It's important to pick our battles once we have been heard. Healthy conflict resolution doesn't mean that we will get exactly what we want.

As we prepare to welcome a new minister, there will surely be some bumps in the road. Here's to getting over those bumps together, as a healthy congregation!

Ann Rhody for the Transition Team

Karl Abbott, chair; Bill Elwell, Mary Louise Gerek ❖

Next Steps for the Ministerial Search Committee: Screening and Interviewing



Submitted by Lisa Gwinne

In December, ministers who are seeking new churches will be looking at the information we provided to the UUA about First Universalist and deciding whether they wish to exchange packets with us. Meanwhile, the search committee is in the process of preparing to screen and interview prospective candidates. Priscilla Richter, our UUA Ministerial Settlement Representative, visited on December 11th to advise us on these steps.

As we meet during the month of December we are working on a list of questions that we will ask during Skype interviews with the ministers we determine would fit well with our congregation. Reverend Martha has offered to stage a mock interview with us, so that we can practice our interview techniques.

On January 3rd, search committee members will receive the names and information about the ministers who are interested in our church. We will be very busy in January reading these ministerial profiles and choosing which ones we want to interview. We will share information packets with the ministers that we interview by Skype, and then decide which to interview in person during February and March. We also will contact various references to find out as much as we can about these ministers' effectiveness in their previous positions. If you don't see much of us in February and March, never fear! We are working hard to find the best minister for our church. Thanks for your faith in us and your support!

The Ministerial Search Committee ❖

Auld Lang Syne

Submitted by Karen Dau, archivist



OUR CHURCH did not always support itself by the method of a pledge system. In the 19th century, in accordance with custom of virtually all churches, we rented our pews, or "slips." Thanks to Dolores DaLomba, a recently discovered slip rental record has been saved for the archive. This record is from 1848, only a year after the former building belonging to this congregation had been completed. I will recreate it as much as possible below.

THE TRUSTEES OF THE FIRST UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF THE CITY OF ROCHESTER, In consideration of the rent hereinafter reserved, and seventy-five dollars to them in hand paid, by Jacob Anderson, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, do hereby **GRANT, BARGAIN, SELL, DEMISE and LET**, to the said J. Anderson and his assigns, slip number four in the **BRICK MEETING HOUSE**, known as the **FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH**, situate on South Clinton St., **TO HAVE AND TO HOLD** the same unto him, the said J. Anderson and his assigns, for and during the term of **NINE HUNDRED AND NINETY-NINE YEARS**, from the first day of January 1848; yielding and paying therefor to the said Trustees of said Universalist Church, their successors or assigns, such yearly rent as the slip-owners of said Church may levy by vote at any regular meeting of said society, the original assessment of value of said slip, payable in equal quarterly payments in advance, in each year during the said term, so long as the said Meeting House shall rightfully be occupied

as a place of religious worship by a congregation of the Universalist denomination of Christians, for the purpose of paying the salary of such minister of the said denomination as may rightfully there officiate, and of defraying the contingent expenses of such congregation.

UPON CONDITION, NEVERTHELESS, That if said rent, or any part thereof, shall at any time hereafter remain unpaid for the space of six months after the same shall become payable, the said Trustees of the said Church, their successors or assigns, may occupy or lease the said slip from year to year, and after the expiration of three years from the time of any such default, and thereupon this lease shall become void, **IT BEING ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD**, that the payment of the arrearages of such rent, at any time within three years after such default, shall authorize the said J. Anderson or his assigns, to take possession of the said slip, if not rented, at any time; and if rented, at the end of the then current year; and from thenceforth to hold the same as if no default had been made. And the said J. Anderson hereby covenants and agrees...that the rent herein reserved, shall be punctually paid at the times herein limited for the payment thereof, so long as the said slip shall be occupied by him.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, [etc.]

Plenty strict, yes? By 1920 an Every Member Canvass and its subsequent incarnations had become a way of life here. ❖

Drop-In Discussion, January Schedule

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

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. Here is the schedule.

January 5. Trans-Pacific Partnership. The United States is in secret negotiations with 11 other nations for a far-reaching trade agreement that its critics say is a corporate wish list. Phil Ebersole will provide background and lead a discussion.

January 12 | *What can one person do?*

Opposing people and institutions that do bad things is Whack-A-Mole activism, leading to disillusionment and discouragement. The most powerful thing you can do is live in the Butterfly cultural story. So says Hank Stone, who will outline his thinking, then facilitate discussion.

January 19 | *Totally Renewable Energy for New York State* Hal Bauer will share the NYS Sierra Club's goal and Energy Policy study for what 100% renewable energy for NYS by 2030 would look like, and how we all might work towards it to reduce the accelerating, long term threat of climate change disruption.

January 26 | *Open Forum Discussion* or to be announced.

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. ❖

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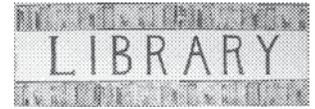
LUUnch BUUnch

Submitted by Joyce Gilbert

Sunday, January 26, 12:30pm.
Sultan Lebanese Restaurant at 1659 Mt. Hope.
Hope to see you there! ❖

Heroic Efforts

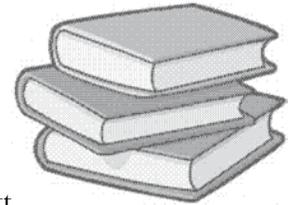
Submitted by Keith Stott



Many of us remember our first black minister, Mark Morrison-Reed, who together with his white wife Donna, came to us about the same time as his doctoral thesis, *Black Pioneers in a White Denomination*, was published. His book tells of the "heroic efforts of two black ministers, Egbert Ethelred Brown and Lewis A. McGee, who carried Unitarianism into the black community. William F. Schultz, then Executive Vice President of the UUA, who wrote the preface, found Mark's book fascinating. I am sure you will too. Call number is 288. ❖

Book Club

Submitted by Eileen Fernandez



Book club selection for January is *State of Wonder* by Ann Patchett.

Everyone is welcome to join us. ❖



Cozy Friday Nite Suppers

Submitted by Janet Rothbeind

Come and be thoughtful. How do we understand truth and meaning in the context of our spiritual journey? We will look at our fourth principle: We affirm and promote: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

On January 24th at 5:30 to 7:30 PM, we will look at our forth principle at our next Cozy Friday Nite Supper. We will take a break and resume with Principle # 5 next fall. Both meat and vegan dishes will be available. Sign up on the bulletin board in the Clara Barton Lounge or contact Janet Rothbeind at janetrothbeind@yahoo.com or 585-288-4897. ❖

House Report Highlights - January 2014

Submitted by Alain Perregaux

House Committee

Since October 6, the House Committee has met regularly once a month to address a number of issues, great and small, regarding the maintenance of the building. The members are: Karen Dau, Ed Deller, Marcy Klein, John Morgan, Michael Scott, Sarah Singal, Michael vanArsdale, Marty Vyverberg, Alain Perregaux. Many, many thanks go to this team of people who make it their duty to turn this ancient building into a smoothly running machine which does not interfere with but supports the mission of the church.

Our mission statement, as proposed by Michael Scott in 2008 is: <<To promote good stewardship of our historic building, preserving and enhancing its value as a physical, artistic and spiritual asset>>.

Roof

The current roof was installed in 1988. It is reaching the end of its life. The House Committee and the Board are working together to develop a strategy for the installation of a new roof of the "right" quality, at the "right" price, by the "right" people, in 2014. It is a tall order but we do not have much of a choice.

Heating System

The recent repairs, whose purpose was the correction of problems caused by aging parts, have NOT had

the unintended consequence of improving the steam consumption, as we had secretly hoped. The House Committee is recommending that we turn the steam consumption data of the last 5 years or so into a concise and logical document that can be presented to the maintenance company (W. P. Taillie) in a formal meeting. The company will then be asked to come up with a proposal to remedy the situation. The proposal should include the expected outcome and the cost.

Minister's Office

While the office is being tidied up in preparation for the new minister, Mike vanArsdale is looking for ways to improve its six windows. The two main goals are 1) to reduce cold air infiltration in the winter and 2) to design new screens and storm windows that can be installed and removed from inside (and not from outside, which is dangerous and totally impractical).

Court Street Lights

Michael Scott and Mike vanArsdale are looking for appropriate fixtures that could be used as exterior lights on either side of the Court Street entrance. Style is obviously critical. Not attracting the attention of would-be thieves is another consideration. ❖

It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year!

Our **Annual Service Auction** is a not-to-be-missed event, and is scheduled for Sunday, February 2, 2014 right after the church service. There will be lunch, lots of items to bid on, and loads of fun! Here's the scoop:

- To donate to the auction, see our website uuroc.org and look for the auction link. You'll fill out an online form. OR you can donate by completing a hard copy form and leaving it in the envelope outside the church office. Be sure to include all of the requested information so that bidders will know why your item or service is worth the bid! **Deadline for donations is Wednesday, January 22.** That's only a few weeks away, so take action soon!
- To volunteer for the auction (we will need help with lunch, set up, clean up, tallying and more) please contact Ann Rhody or Paula Marchese, or visit the Auction table during coffee hour.

If you volunteer, you can still participate in the bidding and the fun!

- Donation booklets will be available after the service on January 26, so you can plot your bidding strategy.
- And most important- **Be there on Sunday February 2 to participate!** The auction is our biggest fund-raiser of the year, and it's all about fun and fellowship. Even if you have not participated in an auction before, it's very user-friendly.
- Proxy bidding will be available for anyone who can't be at the auction. Look for the form online and at the back of the auction donation booklet.

Questions about which items sell best or to check out? Contact Ann Rhody at annrhody@yahoo.com. See you there!

Ann Rhody for the Finance Team ❖



First Universalist Church

150 South Clinton Avenue
Rochester, NY 14604

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Rochester, NY
Permit No. 1351

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

Minister | Rev. Martha Munson

Director of Religious Education | Rev. Lori Staubit

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

Board Of Trustees

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Janet Rothbeind, Rev. Martha Munson (Interim Minister, ex officio)

Editor, Weekly *eOutlook*: Kris White; Monthly paper *Our Outlook*, David Damico/Marcy Klein
More information is available on our website: <http://uuroc.org>.