



# Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY

July 2016

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## Our Outlook

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## Sunday Services | July 2016

### July 3 | *The Lost Art of Cherishing*

As 21<sup>st</sup> Century Americans, we live with such abundance, and have so many choices, we have forgotten how to cherish. Re-learning this valuable skill will not only improve our own lives, but it will make the world a better place for everyone.

-Peter House (Summer minister)



### July 10 | *Why It's Not OK to be a Snob*

These days we are hearing a lot about the gap between the rich and the poor. Can our own attitudes and choices contribute to the problem?

-Peter House (Summer minister)



### July 17 | *Moving to North Carolina isn't the Answer*

We all experience a degree of discontent with our lives, and we all seek change in order to enhance our own happiness. Could the real key be to change nothing?

-Peter House (Summer minister)



### July 24 | *An American Hero*

Harriet Tubman was not a general or a lawgiver, but she set an example for us all by repeatedly risking her life to free herself and then to free others.

- Phil Ebersole and Worship Associate Verdis Robinson



### July 31 | *Color My World*

We all see the world through our own subjective lens. The challenge for ethical people is to nurture an ever-growing awareness of our own biases, and to police ourselves when sharing our version of "reality" with others.

-Peter House (Summer minister)

Summer service begins at 10am





## Minister's Message

*Message from Peter House*

As many of you are no doubt aware, Rochester area tree lovers are dealing with a new and devastating problem – the Emerald Ash Borer. This invasive Asian insect is going to decimate our Ash Tree population over the next several years.

As luck would have it, the tree in front of my house is an Ash. It was treated with medicine a few years ago to stave off its demise. Sadly, the medicine no longer seems to be working, and Michael and I are watching more dead spots appear by the day as we sit on our porch. I believe there is a good chance that it will not last until autumn.

I am very sad about this development, but I also accept that the end is coming for this tree, and so I am appreciating it while it lasts. And it is this very acceptance which allows me to both appreciate the tree, and to refrain from feeling anguished whenever I gaze upon it.

Life is replete with unwanted developments – from the global level to the deeply personal. Some of them can be prevented or mitigated, and it is our human nature to strive in this way.

However, many impending events, no matter how sad, scary, or objectionable are going to happen no matter how much effort we invest in resisting them. Buddhists teach us that all suffering comes from wanting things to be other than they are, and I have found this to be the case in my own life. I certainly don't like everything which happens to me, but learning to practice acceptance and surrender does make the experiences less painful.

As we enter the slower pace of summer, perhaps we might all find some time to reflect on our ability to accept things as they are, and to work on letting go of some of our unfulfilled longings. May the enhanced appreciation of what is help bring peace to your soul which will nourish you when events don't unfold in the way you had hoped. ❖ -Peter



## Walking Together:

**Director of Life Span Faith Development**

*Submitted by Michelle Yates, DRE*

As a kid, I took things pretty seriously. One of these things was love of country. I was sincere in the saying of the Pledge of Allegiance. I was attentive to the words of every patriotic song. I stood for and respected the flag. That's not to say I don't still do these things now, but it's different.

When we are young, we tend to idealize our parents. As we grow we may become angry or disillusioned as we discover that our parents are human, too; they make mistakes, and they don't know everything. As we grow into adulthood, we try to make peace with the humanity and imperfections of our parents; try to develop a different kind of relationship with them and move forward together. This is how it has been for me and my national pride.

Thus, national holidays can have similar complexities to family holidays. The way ones grandma might lay it on too thick, or uncle might always pin you in an uncomfortable conversation. My advice to you in these situations, be they a national or family holiday, is to look for the stories. How your grandparents met, or why your family came to this country. Ask what it was like to serve in the military, or remember together where you were when Kennedy was shot, or when the twin towers fell.

For just as our family stories build our identity, so do our national stories. And many times there is overlap between the two. These stories remind us who we are and have been, and hopefully give us some insight into who we want to be.

There may be things we aren't proud of, or things we don't agree on, but focusing on our shared stories helps us to see the ways we do the best we can, and the values we share. They help us to appreciate how WE are a part of the "family's" story, and the "family's" story is part of us. And that is something to be proud of. We are part of a huge story. We are connected to SOOO many people.

Let this July fourth be a time to remember and reconcile with our national ( and family) heritage, and to endeavor that our part of the story might be something the next generation will be proud of. ❖

# Where Are They now?

Submitted by Marti Eggers



## Part 1 – A Hell Hole

“It was a hell hole,” is how one Mom described the homeless shelter where she and her young daughter had stayed until a place opened up in the RAIHN program. “They treat you mean and they tell you what you have to do, but you don’t get any help doing it. Sometimes you’d rather sleep in your car.”

At a recent RAIHN coordinators’ meeting, three mothers who had been RAIHN guests came to share with us their stories, and I want to share their stories with you. The mother quoted above, I’ll call her Lila, went on to say, “It was so bad, it made me feel mean and evil back. I wasn’t the person I wanted to be. I don’t know what would have happened to us if we’d had to stay there.”

Lila told us how RAIHN volunteers had welcomed her and her little girl warmly and accepted her without judging and how, nurtured by that warmth, she had begun to be able to trust people and start to move toward being the person she did want to be. A year or so ago she and her daughter moved into their own apartment and are stably housed. Lila is now working at the central library with the Flower City AmeriCorps program, and a few weeks ago, she taught a Life Skills class on financial literacy to a current group of RAIHN guests.

Yes, we hosted Lila and daughter a year or so ago, they having come to First Universalist directly from the “hell hole.” We were their first Host Congregation. Lila spoke at length about the warm and welcoming volunteers here and at other congregations. Her story is a poignant reminder of the power of the Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network (RAIHN) and the volunteers – Making a huge difference in people’s lives. RAIHN - Keeping families together getting families home for good.

Next month: *It’s About the Children.* ❖

# Finance article

Submitted by Anne Rhody

- *Thank you* to the Finance team, the Board of Trustees, and the congregation for approving a fiscally responsible, balanced budget for 2016-17! Such a budget is only possible with generous stewardship from the members and friends of First Universalist, and we thank you.
- **PACT** (our most recent Capital Campaign) statements will be mailed to you in early July. Please contact Ann Rhody if you have questions about your PACT pledge.
- Haven’t finished paying your 2015-16 pledge yet? Even after June 30, it’s not too late. Consult your statement or contact collector Bill Jones to see if you have an outstanding balance. If so, please submit your check with “15-16 pledge” in the memo line, and we’ll make sure it’s applied accordingly.
- **The Finance team is welcoming new committee members!** Even if you don’t currently have a full understanding of how the church budgeting process works, you can still be a helpful member of the team and learn a lot in the process. We meet several times a year and also do some business electronically. Contact finance chair Ann Rhody if you’d like to know more! ❖



## *Minister’s Summer Leave*

I will be on vacation during the month of July. During the first two weeks of August I will be taking study leave, to prepare for the new church year. Throughout this time I will be available only in the case of an emergency, and will be taking a sabbath from e-mail. For day-to-day church matters, summer minister Peter House may be reached by calling the minister’s office (325-5092). Thank you, and wishing you a beautiful summer. ~CK ❖

# Living Our Values, Making A Difference

Submitted by Newcomb Losh, Communications Committee



**Local experts on homelessness** joined us on May 22 for a dialog on the issues and impacts of homelessness. L to r: **Rev. Celie**, Nick Coulter, Andy Carey, James Murphy, Kelly Finnigan

Each of the Greater Rochester Community of Churches choose one volunteer or staff person who has exemplified **Faith in Action**. **Lois Baum** was our choice this year, for her work on the homelessness task force.



**Beth Ares** (center with mic) asked local experts what they need from us to care for homeless people more effectively.



Connie Valk photographer.

**Richard Reed** (blue shirt, ctr) and **Lois Baum** (bottom rt) were among at least 10 of our members and friends who stood on the side of love at the **#WeAreOrlando rally** at Bachelor's Forum on June 13 in reaction to the murder of 49 people in a gay bar in Orlando, FL the day before.

Karen Ruganis photographer.

(l to r) **Brandan Fagan**, **Tom Ruganis** and **Mike VanArsdale** put the finishing touches on two benches the House Committee placed near our community garden in early June.



*Have an action photo or two of our members and friends being inclusive, living our values or making a difference? Send them to Newcomb Losh at [jnewcomb.losh@yahoo.com](mailto:jnewcomb.losh@yahoo.com).*

All photographs by Newcomb Losh unless otherwise noted.

A number of us gathered in Genesee Valley Park on June 19 for our annual **year-end picnic** to celebrate our time together and to say good-bye to **Carol Xiong**, our Music Director (bottom photo, arms spread) who is heading to grad school.



From Left: Bill Hickok, Jim Milch, and Tom Williams ▲



“This is a huge cake!” ▲



We wish the best for Carol in her life travels. ▲

**A shout out to Karl Abbott for organizing the picnic.**

As a memorial to **Lauretta Young**, our former treasurer and long time member of UUROC, a group of friends gathered for a walk and pot luck dinner. This is the group assembled at the end of Charlotte pier.

## Book Club News



*Submitted by Shirley Bond*

Just a reminder that the Book Club is taking a summer break and will return **September 25th**.

*The Soul of an Octopus* by Sy Montgomery was suggested by Ruth Fitzgerald... a surprising exploration into the wonder of consciousness.

We meet in the second floor discussion room at 12 noon.

*Have a wonderful summer.*

Any questions please see or email

**Shirley Bond** at [Bondshirl1@gmail.com](mailto:Bondshirl1@gmail.com) or **Sarah Singal** at [ssingal@Rochester.rr.com](mailto:ssingal@Rochester.rr.com) ✦

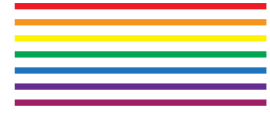
## It's a *Hot* Summer for Music!

Summer services will be filled with wonderful music! We had an unprecedented response to our request for volunteers to provide music during the summer, and you'll hear everything from vocal ensembles to a ukulele. Come to summer services starting at 10:00 AM and be nourished in many ways! Thanks to all who volunteered.

## Remembering Lauretta



# Why March in Pride Parade July 16?



*Submitted by Connie Valk*

We say we want to have visibility in the community.  
We say that we want our UU values known. Here is one way we make it happen.

March with us in the Pride Parade, starting at Alexander Street down Park Avenue toward Culver Road (yes, the route is different this year!) with other UUs behind our banner on July 16. Gathering time is 1:00 PM. If you purchased a First Universalist T-shirt, this is its debut. If you didn't, this is no problem as we are an all inclusive T-shirt church. All T-shirts are welcome!

Please sign up on the Social Justice bulletin board in the Clara Barton Lounge with your contact information or email Connie Valk at [cvalk@frontiernet.net](mailto:cvalk@frontiernet.net), so that you

can be notified of the exact place to meet, as we do not know until the last minute what number in line we will be. If you decide to join us at the last minute, look for people holding clipboards, and ask where "GUUSTO" is lined up.

We usually have twenty or more First Universalists participate. If you have never marched with the group before, come join us as UUs continue to take this stand for social justice. We've been heartened by the demonstration of thanks from the LGBTQ Community. Great strides have been made, but the struggle is not over. Transgender issues are the new frontier in NY State. This is one small way we can make a stand for social justice. ❖

## *Divine Spark*

*Submitted by William Elwell*

It is said  
there is the spark of  
the divine in us  
In me in you.  
But there are those  
who wish to extinguish that spark.

I know the extinguisher  
are humans filled with  
a 1000 fears of the strange, the superficial  
differences, who hurt, cry and respond  
with cruelty.

How do I keep that divine spark alive  
in me and do I see that  
sparkle in others no  
matter how dimly it glows?

I'm told to be gentle  
with others when I want to lash out at  
those perpetrators of hate.

How do I keep from becoming them?  
How do I keep that divine spark in me  
In you in us? ❖

## July and the Garden

*Submitted by Sarah Singal*

A huge thank you to **Tom Ruganis, Michael VanArsdale, Michael Scott, Karl Abbott, Jim Milch, and Ed Deller**. These good men secured and installed two beautiful benches in our alcove garden. This emphasizes the dual focus of the vegetable garden: public food and memorial to members and friends of First Universalist.

On two Sundays this summer we will have outdoor refreshments after the service: July 3 and August 7. Come sip lemonade or iced tea and see what's growing, sit on a bench, walk by the flowers, snip some chives green beans, or other veggies, look for monarch butterfly eggs on the milkweed, and chat with each other. If it's pouring rain we will stay inside. Thanks to Eleanor Siegfried for the good idea!

Anyone interested in joining the informal Thursday morning gardening, just show up at 10 am. Mostly when it's sunny, not so much if it's raining. No previous experience is required. Almost every time we are working in the flower garden someone stops to say how much they appreciate the flowers as they pass by every day. Music for our ears! ❖

# Drop-In Discussion Schedule, July 2016

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

Drop-in discussions are held each Sunday at First Universalist Church of Rochester, 150 S. Clinton Ave., Rochester, NY. We meet year-round in the Adult Lounge on the second floor of our church. Summer discussions are at 11:15am–12:15pm. 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.

## July 3 | *African-Americans and Independence Day*

In 1852, Frederick Douglass gave a speech here in Rochester on “What to the slave is the Fourth of July?” He said the fine words of the Declaration of Independence applied only to white American citizens and not to black American slaves. In 2014, a black woman, Danielle Allen, published a book, *Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality* which she argued that the Declaration's ideals were relevant to black people. Phil Ebersole will discuss the ideas in her book.

## July 10–17 | *To be announced.*

## July 24 | *A Woman President?*

Janet Rothbeind will lead a discussion on whether Americans are ready to accept a woman as their President.

## July 31 | *Millennials*

The Millennial generation – men and women born between 1980 and 2000 – are changing the USA. Steve Farrington will discuss the values and thoughts of this rising generation.

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** concerning the summer schedule.

Topics are subject to change. Check the bulletin board in First Universalist's Clara Barton Lounge for the latest information. ❖



# House News-July 2016

Submitted by Tom Ruganis

June has been a very productive month with a lot of activity and developments:

- The **garden benches** have been installed! Please take a moment and try them out to enjoy our wonderful little garden.
- **Signs:** Thanks to the collaboration of the Communications and House Committees, this summer you will see several dozen new signs inside and outside the church. This initiative will make the church more welcoming and easier to navigate, and improve overall safety. Exterior signs will welcome guests and direct them to the correct entrances, including our handicapped entrance in the parking lot. Interior signs will label main rooms and provide directional arrows to the sanctuary, Clara Barton Lounge, classrooms, offices, restrooms and other important areas. Other signs will help visitors locate the handicapped elevator and restroom; some signs will also have wording in Braille. Clearly marked fire exit and emergency exit signs will improve safety for everyone.
- The refinishing of the **office floors** has been scheduled for August 15<sup>th</sup>. We will remove all furniture from both the Volunteer and Church offices on Sunday August 14<sup>th</sup> in preparation for work to start Monday at 8am. We apologize in advance for the disruption.
- The **plaster repairs** needed in the Sanctuary may be delayed. Our plaster repair person is unusually busy and will not be able to do the work this summer. We have other references and will investigate these options.

As always, if you are interested in the above or have any other repair or project you would like to see completed, or would like to take on, or join the House Committee, please let anyone on the committee know.

The Committee is currently: Tom Ruganis, Chair (tom@ruganis.net), Sarah Singal, Karen Dau, Marcy Klein, Mike VanArsdale, Michael Scott and Ed Deller. We would love to hear from you! ❖

## **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 service begins at 10:00am Sundays**

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**Summer Minister** | Peter House

**Director of Life Span Faith Development** | Michelle Yates

**Music Director** | Carol Xiong

**Sexton** | Brandon Fagan

**Nursery Care Provider** | Carol Williams

**Office Administrator** | Melissa Davies

*Office hours, Monday – Friday, 9:30–2:30. Telephone 585.546.2826*

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### **Board Of Trustees 2015–2016**

Ed Deller (President), Nancy Gaede ( Vice-president), Karen Ruganis (Clerk), Michael VanArsdale, Janet Rothbeind, Kitty Forbush, Tim Mullins, Rev. Celie Katovitch (ex-officio)

Editor, *This Week at First Universalist* (digital): Melissa Davies; Monthly newsletter *Our Outlook*, David Damico. Church photo on cover by Tom Ruganis.

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