



First Universalist Church of Rochester

"Nurture the Spirit and Serve the Community"

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 27, 2026

Responding to City Inaction, Downtown Church Provides 24-Hour Portable Toilet

First Universalist Church, located in Downtown Rochester at 150 Clinton Avenue South, now has a portable toilet located on church property to temporarily provide a private solution to a public problem. With no movement from the City on this issue, it seemed the only way to keep the church property clean.

The City of Rochester's public toilets are closed and locked at night. So, having no private place to attend to a basic human need, passersby and the unhoused use church alcoves and gardens as their toilets. Adam Durand, volunteer garden coordinator at the church, facilitated the rental of the portable toilet. "No one should be forced to relieve themselves in a church garden. Yet our custodian and congregation members were cleaning up human waste because our unhoused neighbors had nowhere else to go. This toilet is a small act of dignity in response to a crisis that only the city can solve."

The church, along with St. Mary's Church across Washington Square, and the Washington Square Community Association, Inc. have been advocating for 24/7 public toilets since 2023.

Rev. Eileen Casey-Campbell, minister of the church said this: "The worth and dignity of every person is a core value in our faith. Bathroom use is a basic human need, and we believe everyone — especially our neighbors with the least resources — has a right to accessible, dignified, safe spaces to meet that need."

First Universalist Church, on the National Register of Historic Places, is a venue for free weekly concerts for Eastman at Washington Square, and for a host of other community events.

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