



Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

December 2011

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Our Outlook

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Sunday Services | December 2011

December 4th | *Peace, Perfect Peace*

In this season we long for peace, sing about peace, hope and pray for peace. We'll try to create some peace this morning, some calm amid the tumult. -- Rev. Martha Munson

December 11th | *Music Sunday*

Josiah Armes, Choir-- Rev. Martha Munson

December 18th | *Stars!*

A Solstice/Evolution/Creation service for all ages. --- Rev. Martha Munson and friends.

December 25th | *A Come as you are Christmas*

Come, come, whoever and however you are: Full of joy, or feeling blue; in pajamas and snowboots, or your holiday sweater with the flashing lights. Join us for a relaxed celebration of the true gifts of Christmas. Led by Worship Associate Bridget Watts.

And 2 Special Services

December 8th, 7p.m. | *Communion*

If this Advent Season would be enhanced by communion, this brief contemplative service might be for you. Liberal Christians, their friends, and the curious are all welcome. 7 p.m.-- Rev. Martha Munson

December 24th, 7p.m. | *Gifts!*

A Christmas Eve service of story, song, and candlelight, suitable for all ages. Bring your family, friends, neighbors. -- Rev. Martha Munson and friends.

AND + NOW + ABIDETH + FAITH
HOPE + LOVE + THESE + TREE + BUT
THE + GREATEST + OF + THESE + IS + LOVE





Minister's Message

Submitted by Rev. Martha Munson

Walking With You

I often wonder how is it that a season of so much joy causes so much consternation? There is little doubt that for many the holidays are a challenge. Some of us are worried about our job, or our health, or our children, or our elders. Some of us are just not feeling very festive, or are feeling left out of the festivities. Beloved persons will be absent from our holiday tables. Perhaps it is we who will not be where we wish to be. Trouble seems magnified when "everyone else" seems to be having so much fun.

We long for earlier, simpler times, or for things to be as we remember them "always" being. Even an inveterate lover of the season like me can be caught off guard amid change and loss. This season is challenging in its pace, its demands, and its pangs of sadness. It also has its moments of quiet joy, sweet nostalgia and unexpected kindness. It's a mixed bag and, if we're honest, we probably have to admit that it's always been a mixed bag. If the holidays are difficult for you, please be in touch. I'd be glad to listen, and to help as I am able. I wish for each of you as much hope and love as will make your holidays bright. And for us and for our world, I pray for peace. ❖

Faithfully, Martha

Help Decorate a Mitten Tree

Submitted by Patti Goodwin

Each year the members of this congregation make hats, mittens, and scarves to decorate our Christmas tree in the sanctuary. We plan to have a mitten tree again this holiday season. Please bring your new, lightly used, and for the creative among us, your homemade offerings of mittens, gloves, scarves and hats, for the children who arrive at School 7 with no mittens and very cold hands.

The children range from Kindergarten to Sixth grade, and adult sizes can also be used. The bare tree will be up after church on December 11, and you can bring your gifts in and decorate any time after that until January 1st. Your contributions will give children warmth and comfort this winter. Questions? Contact ssingal@rochester.rr.com. ❖



R.E.flections

Submitted by Kim Dehon,
Religious Education Coordinator

"Happiness is a hug"

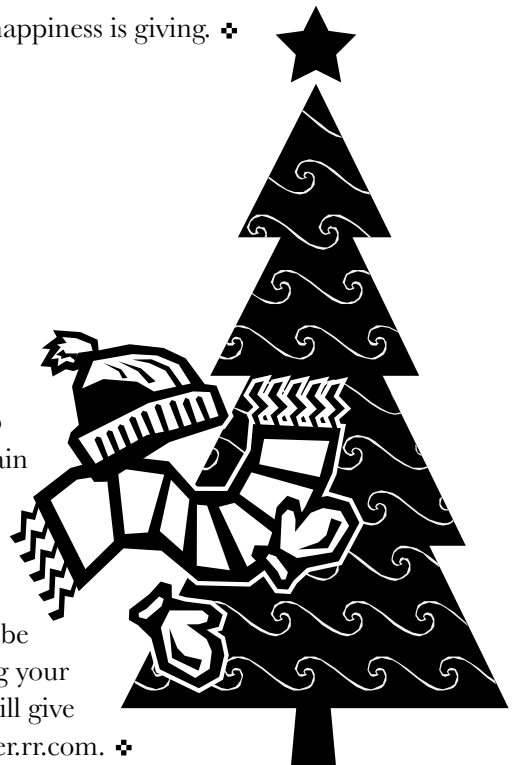
--Charles M. Schulz

Every year my family buys a Charlie Brown advent calendar. In part because I grew up loving Charlie Brown and my daughter has followed in my footsteps, and in part because under each daily window there is a suggestion of something kind to do for a friend, family member, neighbor, or local flock of birds. Under Snoopy, for example, is the idea to deliver a wreath; under Linus, to make a holiday craft; and under Woodstock, the peanut butter in a pinecone rolled in birdseed winter favorite. All of these notions remind us that the holidays are about giving.

Here at church the mitten tree is a simple way to give. You can hang new, handmade, or gently used mittens, scarves, and hats on the tree in the sanctuary for the children of School #7. In Religious Education, the kids enjoyed decorating hands to give to the congregation as reminders to bring in these items for the mitten tree. Please display the hands in a prominent place and help support the mitten tree in any way you can.

And remember, happiness is giving. ❖

Happy holidays,
Kim





The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

Submitted by Michael Scott

On Sunday, Nov. 20 we distributed “Guest at Your Table” boxes, for use during the holiday season. The idea behind these is simple: at every family meal we contribute a small amount—the change in our pockets, perhaps—to support the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), which works on behalf of human rights around the world.

Today’s UUSC was created in 1963 by the merger of the Unitarian Service Committee and the Universalist Service Committee, both of which date from World War II. The UUSC is an independent, non-sectarian associate of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Though guided by UU principles, it receives no financial support from the UUA, and one need not be a Unitarian Universalist to join.

The Unitarian Service Committee was officially founded in May 1940, as an outgrowth of relief missions to Czechoslovakia approved by the Board of the American Unitarian Association in December 1938, in the wake of Nazi invasion. Martha and Waitstill Sharp, the leaders of the Czech missions, organized shelter and sustenance for refugees, and are credited with arranging the escape of 1–3000 persecuted people. In 2005 the Sharps were posthumously named Righteous Among the Nations by the Holocaust Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem.

The Universalist Service Committee was officially founded in mid 1945, as an outgrowth of the War Relief Committee, established by the Universalist Church of America in 1940.

In April 1941 the Unitarian Service Committee adopted as its symbol a flaming chalice commissioned by USC executive director Charles Joy and designed by refugee artist Hans Deutsch. This unique symbol has subsequently come to represent the Unitarian Universalist movement as a whole.

Today the UUSC has more than 40,000 members, and an annual budget in excess of \$5 million. The organization is guided in its work by UU principles and by the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It focuses its efforts on four major programs: (1) economic justice, in partnership with an extensive network of indigenous groups around the world, promoting womens’ rights, workers’ rights, and a living wage; (2) environmental justice, especially access to clean water; (3) civil liberties, with an emphasis on the eradication of torture; and (4) assistance to marginalized, neglected, or oppressed populations in the wake of natural and human disasters. The UUSC also mobilizes grassroots volunteers for letter-writing, human rights advocacy, and “JustWorks” camps for short-term hands-on projects in the US and around the world.

If you aren’t able to attend the service on Nov. 20, please drop by the church office to get a Guest at Your Table box, and remember it at mealtime through the end of 2011, when we will be collecting the contributions. If you would like to become a member of the UUSC, fill out the form on the bottom of the box, or visit www.uusc.org. The website contains a wealth of information on UUSC history and programs, educational resources, and opportunities to get involved in the advancement of human rights. The most recent annual report, for fiscal year 2010, can be found at uusc.org/content/annual_report_2010. ❖

Hurry, Hasten and Hustle!

Submitted by Marie Sidoti, Co-chair, Music Committee

Hurry! It’s Coming! Dec. 31st. It means the end of this year’s required IRA withdrawals going tax-free. It means the end of 2011 tax-deductible donations. So hurry, hasten and hustle! *Contribute to our Organ Restoration.* Make marvelous music with your tax-freed funds. Please see your tax advisor for details. ❖

Drop-In Discussion, November 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.

Discussions are at 9:15 a.m. and, unless otherwise indicated, 12 noon. Here is the schedule.

Sunday, Dec. 4 | *Occupy Wall Street*. We'll try to figure out what the nationwide Occupy movement is trying to accomplish, whether its goals are good or bad and how much chance of success it has. Phil Ebersole will facilitate.

Sunday, Dec. 11 | *Margaret Fuller*. Shirley Bond will do a presentation and lead a discussion of Margaret Fuller (1810-1850), a pioneer feminist, reformer and writer, and a leading transcendentalist. She was the first woman allowed to use the Harvard library, the first published woman book reviewer in New England and author of *Woman in the 19th Century*, considered to be the first important feminist work in the United States. Click on <http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/margaretfuller.html> for her biography.

Sunday, Dec. 18 | *Winter Holiday Memories*. As UUs, we have different ways of thinking of and expressing our relationship with the winter holiday season. Is it lights, snow, presents, family, food, kids, merriment, song, church services, assisting those in need? Come share your tradition. David Damico will facilitate.

Sunday, Dec. 25 | No drop-in discussion

Sunday, Jan. 1 | No drop-in 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>. If you have a topic you'd like discussed or, better still, would like to lead a discussion, speak to Phil Ebersole or David Damico. ❖

Talva Chapin

Submitted by Marcy Klein, Talva's daughter

Talva Chapin, a member of this church for several years, died October 31 at the age of 84. She is survived by two daughters, one son, and four grandchildren, all in the Rochester area.

Talva lived a full life, one that focused on service to the community and championing human rights. In the 1950's she cofounded the Rochester Memorial Society, which advocated simple funerals and worked to prevent abuses by unscrupulous funeral homes. She was in the forefront of the anti-war and civil rights movements in the 60's, and in the 1970's, she was a local leader of *National Organization for Women* (NOW). She was active in the Democratic Party her whole adult life.

She taught grammar school, tutored injured and suspended high school students, and for many decades--until a year ago--visited and taught prisoners at area prisons. She still found time to be active in the Unitarian Universalist Churches, sing with the *Oratorio Society*, attend *RPO* concerts and baseball games, tend a lovely garden, and most recently, participate in a philosophy group.

When she realized her disease would be fatal, Talva focused her energy on giving her belongings to those who could use them. Her positive attitude and gentle nature lasted until the end. She was a terrific role model and teacher: she demonstrated how to live with courage and compassion, and how to die with grace and dignity. She is buried next to her mother at *Mt. Hope Cemetery*, not far from *Susan B. Anthony*.

Talva's memorial service will be held at the church sometime in April; all are invited to come and share their memories of her. ❖

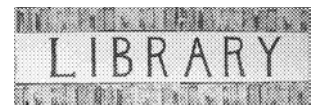
Is it better to put our faith
in God or in Humanity?

For a discussion of the
historic declaration in favor

of the latter, see *Making the Manifesto, the Birth of Religious Humanism*, by former UUA president William F. Schulz. He relates the creation of the *Humanist Manifesto* during the Great Depression, with its "new interest in radical political and economic thought." (Sound familiar?)

The call number in our library is 211 S.

(P. S. There are several references to David Rhys Williams and Clinton Lee Scott.) ❖



Jumping Jacks at School 7

Submitted by Sarah Singal

Michelle Obama's Get Moving initiative of October 11 seeks to break a world record for kids doing jumping jacks for one minute during a 24 hour period. The previous record was 20,425. Guinness will take the final tally and determine if we now have a new world record. This will take several months, not breaking any records for speed.

It is a sunny and warm October afternoon. Adults gather near the playground, and a gym teacher complete with pony tail and clipboard, megaphone near by, connects with the adults, assigning jobs. Alice is the official non-parent, non-teacher supervisor. Sarah and Marti have lessons on stop watches. Eileen and Kris stand with an envelope and a sign with fourth grade teachers' names on it, joining other pairs of adults forming a line in the middle of a grassy lawn. Soon groups of 3rd through 6th grade classes begin arriving quietly, single file, each student placing a ticket in the envelope for that class, and quietly falling into line behind the adult pair. As the rows of children fill up, there is a quiet hum of conversation. A Channel 13 cameraman sets up. Everyone looks around expectantly. Then the megaphone, the directions, and "are you ready?" "yes", "Are You Ready??" "Yes!" "ARE YOU READY???" "YES!!!!!" "GO!" All at once stop watches are activated, the lines of children become one body of perpetual motion, flailing arms and legs, laughter and shouting, pure energy and joy. It is almost impossible not to jump, and many adults join in. Sixty long seconds pass. "STOP!" and there on the lawn are some ragged lines of kids, panting and laughing. All are thanked, and the children begin to gather their gear for the bus ride home. The cameraman packs up. Alice makes the final tally: 257 jumpers. The adults chat a bit and head for home, and the lawn is empty. ❖

Come Holiday Shoppe with Us

Submitted by Laretta Young

It's never too early to start your holiday shopping. Our 1st Universalist Holiday Shoppe has reopened for our 3rd year! Last year we raised over \$500 for our church. Let's see how we do this year.

Look for new and affordable products at the Shoppe table, including scarves hand-dyed by Lisa Gwinner (100% cotton, hand-woven, fair trade materials only), Holiday themed pillow cases by Nancy Gaede (in limited quantities), and flavorful spice mixes from *Yaya's Yummys*. *Yaya's Yummys* is a locally owned and run business. They feature dry spice mixes for Veggie Dips-Buffalo-Blue Wing Dip, Bacon 'n Tomato. Fruit dips-Creme Brule', Carrot Cake. Olive Oil Blends-Brushetta, Basil and Pine-nut Pesto to name only a few. Look for samples and tastings in the lounge. Go to <http://www.yayasummys.com/> for full details.

Scrip cards (gift cards) will also be available for purchase. Due to shipping charges that eat into the profits, we will place only 1 order. The deadline to order is Sunday 12/11/11. Your cards will be available the following Sunday 12/18/11.

So make your list and check it twice. Shop with us for something very nice. Contact Laretta Young and Paula Marchese for more information. ❖



Family Pot Luck Dinner

Submitted by Elizabeth Osta

Sunday, December 5th at 5 p.m, Clara Barton Lounge, First Universalist Church

Please bring the whole family and friends too on Sunday December 4th at 5 p.m. for a potluck evening together. We'll celebrate the season with good food, stories, songs and games. With this evening so close to Hanukkah

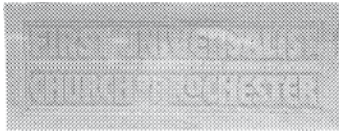
(December 20 – 28) and St. Nicholas Day (December 6th) you never know what holiday traditions will be 'afoot' to intrigue and delight all ages.

Contact Elizabeth Osta (elizabethosta@gmail.com) or call 586-9947.

Hope you can help fill the season with the light and laughter as 2011 moves to its last days. ❖

Auld Lang Syne

Submitted by Karen Dau, archivist



THE CAREER of Rev. Charles Hammond was inextricably bound up with the founding of this congregation. He first came to the attention of the Universalist faithful when as a young resident of Niagara County he began preaching Universal Salvation in the summer of 1830. In October of that year he received a Letter of Fellowship from the denomination which entitled him to preach in areas under their jurisdiction. Then in 1843 he located in Rochester, where he and some colleagues began publication of a weekly newspaper titled *The Western Luminary*, and on May 28 he assumed charge of the city's Universalist Society. Hammond presided during what must have been a very painful time for all concerned, because by March of 1844 the congregation had sold its building and disbanded. Only the Sabbath School, meeting in the basement of the Unitarian church, was keeping Universalism alive in the Flour City.

Continuing as editor of his embattled paper, Hammond struggled to keep it going in a cutthroat market. He was frequently on the defensive, and at times justifiably so. In 1843 he had been deeply offended by an article in a New York denominational paper which criticized the Universalist periodical market—and specifically named his *Luminary*. In a long, spirited retort he wrote in part, “You think it best that the ‘old’ and large periodicals should eat the little ones. Well: brother, if all our brethren were of your mind, and under the influence of your philosophy, you might be gratified.—

But as it is, we see no help for you. [T]he members of our denomination will, no doubt, publish just as many papers as they please, and of just the size they please, and as long as they please; and we see no remedy short of despotism...Our motto is ‘equal rights’...” Hammond also labored to get the dispirited Rochester society back on its feet, and his *Luminary* provides a view of local Universalism from the time that cannot be found anywhere else. When his *Luminary* ceased publication in July of 1846, he sold his assets to a Universalist paper headquartered in Ohio.

Out of work, and sick with the consumption that eventually ended his life, Charles Hammond shocked Universalists across the entire nation when he abandoned the ministry a few years later for the controversial new Spiritualist movement. He visited the Wayne County home of the Fox sisters, gathered supporters, and wrote early books on the subject. Early on both he and his wife joined the First Universalist Society of Rochester, newly incorporated in April of 1846, but apparently he had no further contact with it. He died on July 10, 1859 in Rochester, predeceased by a baby son and survived by his wife Sybil and his only daughter Seraph Hamlin. Perhaps he had placed impossible demands upon his faith—or perhaps it had demanded the impossible from him. But I believe that he literally gave all he had to the cause of Universalism, so that when his parish closed and his paper failed, he had nowhere else in the movement to turn. ❖

The 1st Universalist Service Auction

Submitted by Paula Marchese

Sunday, January 29th, 2012

- ◆ Fantastic service items and other goodies
- ◆ Fun and fellowship luncheon with
- ◆ Food to die for from your fellow congregants

It's not too early to save this special date. Last year's auction raised over \$5,500. Services offered included everything from cooking lessons, to game nights to fine dining on exotic cuisine.

Mark the date on your calendars (January 29th after service), plan to attend (there will be food!). Also, and most important, please start thinking about what items or services you can donate to make this auction the one to remember.

Look for more service auction news in the weeks to come. If you have questions about the auction, if you'd like to volunteer, contact Paula Marchese or Laurretta Young. ❖

House Report Highlight - Dec. 2011

Submitted by Alain Perregaux

Clean-up Day, Oct. 22

Our October Clean-up Day was extremely successful. 17 people showed up; some for a short time and some for many hours. All tasks on the list but one were completed and even a couple of tasks that were not on the list got done. Many, many thanks to all these dedicated members who make it possible to maintain our building.

Court Street Entrance Door

Ted Robertson of Kirkwall Construction completed the adjustments of the Court Street door on October 13. He also adjusted the closer device, so that the door slams effectively but gently. There has been no case of the door being accidentally left unlatched since then.

Energy Audit

The last act of this exercise was to take a closer look at all the EXIT signs. During the Clean-up Day, we discovered that there are 12 of them: 5 are passive (no lighting), 2 use fluorescent tubes and 5 have LEDs. There is not much that could be done to save significant amounts of energy on that front.

Parking Lot

The parking lot was resurfaced on July 9. One detail that was left unfinished was the broken wooden pole that holds the cable along the east edge. On October 28, a new pole was mounted by Kevin & Russ, two feet away, to face a dividing line between two parking places, so that it would not be so easily hit by vehicles. On Thursday 11/3, the cable was restrung and the old pole removed.

Downspout in SE corner of the Sanctuary

We thought that the problem with this downspout had been solved when water flooded the basement during the repair of the gutters in 2008. Recently, during an episode of heavy rain, water showed up again on the floor of the old dish washer room in the basement. Using an access hole in the downspout, we injected water to test the trap under the basement floor. The trap was free of debris and the water was flowing freely. The problem is NOT due to water backing up in the pipe. In case no new brilliant idea is offered that could explain the phenomenon, we will have to hire a plumber who has an endoscope type camera to inspect the pipe.

Heat in 1st Floor Restrooms

In spite of Marty Vyverberg's successful effort to insulate the hottest pipes in the boiler room, the heat in the first floor restrooms has hardly changed. Clearly some more detective work is needed to find the source.

Hearing Loop

An old problem has recently come to the fore again: the background hum that affects those who rely on the hearing loop to hear what is said in the sanctuary. A cursory test of the system by three well intentioned (but not specialist) gentlemen, revealed that the background noise is most likely caused by the magnetic emissions of transformers that are used throughout the building to power low voltage devices such as control panels, safety lights, alarm systems, door bells, etc. A specialist is due to inspect the system and to come up with his own diagnostics. A "hum suppressor" device in the circuit of the loop may be what will solve the problem but we do not know yet.

Capital Improvements

The Architect's proposal for the estimate phase of the project has been signed by the Moderator and the Chair of the House Committee (namely Howard Spindler and Alain Perregaux). Once the estimates are available, early in 2012, we can decide how much of the desired renovation we can afford.

According to our grand plan, the renovation of the sanctuary will be done in the Summer of 2012 and the rest of the structural improvements will be done in the following 3 years or so. We will know in a few months if this plan is realistic. ❖



First Universalist Church

150 South Clinton Avenue
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

Minister | Rev. Martha Munson

Religious Education Coordinator | Kim Dehon

Music Director | Josiah Armes

Sexton | Brandon Fagan

Nursery Care Provider | Carol Williams

Office Administrator | Kris McCarty White

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