



Our Outlook

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Sunday Services | March 2021

March 7 | *Democracy as a Dream Deferred? I'm Taking the Fifth*

After the “perfect storm” of events of the past year – coronavirus, political upheaval and economic free fall, it may seem our democracy is on its last legs – truly a “dream deferred.” However, on that question I will take the fifth. But what fifth?

— *Rev. Dr. Richard S. Gilbert*

March 14 | *It's Been A YEAR...*

...a commonly heard phrase throughout the entirety of the past year. We gather this Sunday to honor the one-year anniversary of moving towards an online worshipping community. What have you learned? What are you missing? Please send answers to these questions to minister@uuroc.org and they will be incorporated into the service.

— *Rev. Lane Campbell*

March 21 | *All Bound Up Together*

As we see the faults of American individualism we can lean into the wisdom of activists and Unitarian Universalists who teach us that our liberation is bound up with each other. After all, we are “one great bundle of humanity”. Join the 4th Universalist Society of New York City, the First Universalist Church of Rochester, and the UU Church of Canton as we explore contemporary Universalism.

— *Rev. Lane Campbell, Rev. James Galasinski, & Rev. Schuyler Vogel*

March 28 | *Douglass' Dreams*

Frederick Douglass' dreams of freedom and liberty brought him to Rochester, New York. From 1847-1872, Douglass called Rochester home and lived there longer than anywhere else in his life. Why were his dreams deferred in Rochester rather than realized? As we seek to build a Beloved Community, what wisdom can we glean from Douglass' dreams?

— *Verdis Robinson*

❖ **Service begins at 10:30am** ❖

*Worship will be meeting online into the foreseeable future. Please join us—
Internet link: <https://zoom.us/j/131764422>; Phone number: 646 558 8656 with
Meeting ID: Meeting ID: 131 764 422. ❖*

Inside	Page
Rev Lane, Finance News.....	2
Rev. Michelle, RAICA.....	3
Drop-In Discussion	4
Stewardship, RAIHN	4
EcoJustice News	5
FIAC News	5
Interfaith Impact.....	5
Race in a Brave Space	6
Eckberg Film Series.....	7



What a Year!

Message from Rev. Lane Campbell

It has been a full year since we began worshipping as a virtual community. It has been a full year when we have not been able to gather together in our building. And what a year it has been!

With an election, all of the adjustments to be made living in a world with a pandemic, uprisings for racial justice that continue to reveal our injustice system, and living through a cycle of seasons in a different rhythm—this year has been one that has asked a lot of us.

On March 14, we will gather for worship over Zoom to honor this one-year anniversary. To honor the very full nature of this year and to explore together what we are learning, I hope to create a litany of all of our experiences with this very different time.

Would you send me some words or, even better, a video of yourself describing one thing you have learned and one thing you are missing? Really, just a sentence or two. Please send them to minister@uuroc.org by Sunday, March 7.

I hope to weave together our words into a tapestry of the multiple experiences we each bring to our gathering community.

What I know about the times ahead, which is honestly very little, is that we continue to need one another to get through this. We need one another to survive. Our connections and their absence have highlighted what a lifeline these connections truly are.

As we explore this month's theme of "Dreams Deferred," I imagine there have been so many of our dreams not realized or put off or even set aside in service to the larger good or even just out of surrender to what the reality of our present moment is. I am grateful, as always, to be marking milestones and to be exploring this weighty topic with all of you. ❖

Finance News & Notes

Submitted by Ann Rhody, Finance Chair

The First Universalist Church of Rochester continues to stay financially strong, even through a pandemic and no in-person services! How?

The answer: annual pledges from our members and friends! Pledges account for 79% of our operating income. Combine that with a healthy endowment and some smaller income categories, and we are going strong. Be sure to watch for information on this year's Stewardship (Pledge) Campaign, "*Forward Through the Ages*." Meanwhile, Finance Committee member Dave VanArsdale offers some food for thought on giving:

Taxwise giving

- As tax season approaches, and it is time to plan next year's pledge, you may wish to consider this strategy: The stock market is at historic highs with prospects uncertain. For those who may be fortunate enough to have some appreciated stock, you may wish to pay your pledge with a stock gift to the Church. The Church gets the market value of the stock, you get that as a deduction, and there is no capital gains tax. It is a win-win. Check with your Tax Advisor to make sure it works for you.
- For those of you over 70½ and taking a Minimum Required Distribution from your 401k or IRA retirement plan: the IRS allows you to direct this distribution to a charity such as the Church. Instead of a deduction, it reduces your taxable income. Check with your Tax Advisor to see if you would benefit.

Finally, in the spirit of "*Forward Through the Ages*," you can help the church for future generations by remembering First Universalist Church in your will or memorial plans. For information on any aspect of giving, you can email finance@uuroc.org, and we will connect you with the appropriate person!

Thank you for keeping our church strong and vibrant! ❖



A Dream Deferred

Message from Rev. Michelle Yates

Harlem

by Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
Like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

Langston Hughes’ powerful words were certainly speaking to the experiences of African Americans waiting for the dream of equality and equal opportunity. Still, I believe they resonate powerfully with those experiencing many forms of grief and “dreams deferred,” particularly as we acknowledge that one year has passed since our lives changed dramatically with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the US.

In analyses of Hughes’ poem, many reflect that he was alluding to a biblical reference that would be familiar to his African American audience. Proverbs 13:12 states, “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.”

I imagine most people can connect with the idea of feeling heartsick when thinking about hopes and dreams that have been deferred over this past year. Perhaps like me, you may brainstorm ideas of things to hope for that are still possible only to be reminded how interdependent everything is.

This past year has been a spiritual practice of letting go, of finding joy in fulfilling smaller simpler dreams, OR focusing in on what our core values tell us is most important and adding our efforts to larger movements.

In working with the terminally ill or permanently

disabled, it can be empowering to ask them to consider what they now hope or wish for. If we only have today or life as it is now, what is the longing that we CAN fulfill that might become a tree of life; a tree that we might hang other hopes on.

Daily appreciation of nature, regular connections with others, time for laughter and creativity, commitment to causes, finishing a project, reaching out to a friend you lost touch with? What is a longing you may still yet fulfill?

Yours in the Journey,

Rev. Michelle ❖

Upcoming RAICA Events

Submitted by Sarah Singal

Join us for the next installment of our RAICA* Virtual Summit: Words of Spirit: Ways of Action on March 10 at 7pm. We are proud to present Grupo Latino Catolico (The Latinx Catholic Action Team) of the *Citizens Climate Lobby* and “*On Care for Our Common Home; Reaching Out to Engage the Rochester Area LatinX Community in a Discussion about Climate Change*”. This is an interfaith discussion open to all. It will be bilingual, in Spanish with English subtitles. The webinar will engage participants in a personal discussion about climate change in the context of their Latinx identity and will include practical solutions, from getting a free home energy audit to supporting the Energy Innovation Act.

Please join RAICA for an inspiring and hope-filled movie screening and panel discussion. Narrated by and featuring Woody Harrelson, *Kiss the Ground* is a groundbreaking film that reveals the first viable solution to our climate crisis.

- 5:45-6pm: check-in to Zoom room
- 6-7:30pm: watch movie
- 7:30-8:20pm: panel discussion with Elizabeth Henderson, organic farmer; and Glenn Gall, teacher of permaculture, agroforestry, planned grazing, and biological farming.

Our free screening is sponsored by grant funds and available to registered participants.

For more info and registration on both of these events go to: raica.net/events.

*Rochester Area Interfaith Climate Action ❖

Drop-In Discussion

Submitted by Beth Ares

Current drop-in discussions are held each Tuesday evening from 6:30 to 7:30pm via the church Zoom account. Contact DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org for the Zoom link, or look on uuroc.org!

Sometimes our discussions are based on books/articles, but you don't have to do any preparation to participate. Just drop in. People of all viewpoints are welcome to make presentations or join.

March 2 | *Statehood for Washington D.C.?*

There are common sense reasons why it should be a state, but some compelling, historical reasons why not. What do you think? Beth Ares presents.

March 9 | *Hate Groups*

What they are, how they gather influence, beliefs they promulgate, and local activity. With references from the Southern Poverty Law Center, we'll learn more about how people are recruited and, of course, share our own experiences. Donna Anderson and Theo Munson present.

March 16 | *Town Hall with Rev. Lane Campbell*

Want to talk about what's going on at church? What's up with our medic presence? Re-opening? Online services? Where are we to go in this justice moment? Join a discussion about all things UURoc!

March 23 | *Did Mom say to eat all the food on your plate because children elsewhere are starving?*

What does it really mean to waste food? Up to 40% of all food produced goes uneaten, resulting in massive amounts of wasted water, landfill use, climate pollution and other environmental damage. Shelley Adams and Sarah Singal present and explain.

March 30 | *Learning From Historical Analogies*

After the Civil War, Lincoln professed "With malice toward none, and charity for all." Beautiful words! He was subsequently assassinated and Jim Crow laws were enacted. Confederates were pardoned, amnesties were granted. Should the Confederates have been "called out" and confronted instead? What does this mean for us today? Bill Elwell presents.

Do you have a topic for us? Contact our team members with your Drop-In Discussion proposals: DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org. ❖

Stewardship News

Submitted by Brian Mumey, Kathi Milch, & Jim Milch

Forward Through the Ages: 175 years and still going strong! For 175 years First Universalist church has been a shining light in Rochester. We have thrived, through good times and bad. This past year was no exception. How does this happen? Vision, leadership, commitment, and financial support of generous congregants like you. Please pledge for the 2021-2022 budget year to keep our church strong, hopefully for another century. Moving forward, we can do it, together!

In a few weeks you will receive your pledge packet. We ask that you look it over and thoughtfully make your financial commitment. We are all stronger together. Remember that your pledge, small or large, always makes a difference!

There are several ways to let us know your pledge. You can mail your pledge card to the church. You can pledge online at uuroc.org. At the bottom of our webpage is a button called "Stewardship". Please return your pledge by April 11, Stewardship Sunday.

It is our pleasure to serve as your Stewardship cochairs. Please contact us with any questions! ❖

please join us for
**DINNER
IN WITH
Philomina**

THURSDAY, MARCH 4TH 2021

4:00-5:30pm meal pick-up
6:30-7:30pm virtual program

RAIHN
an affiliate of Family Promise®

\$30*
meal
*suggested donation

RAIHN (now *Family Promise of Greater Rochester*) is hosting a drive-through dinner and virtual event on March 4! "Dinner In with Philomina" will raise funds to support families at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Learn more and register here: raihn.org/dinner-in-with-philomina ❖

FIAC News:

Walking Towards Peace

Submitted by Joy Leccese

There is no real peace without justice, but we are not marching these days: your Faith In Action Council is walking, however, toward peace with all of you. I'm happy to update you on some of the activities for the Social Justice Ministries of our congregation.

Our Congregational Project (led by the FIRE team members) continues to labor in the vineyards with gusto. (FIRE: *First Universalist Initiative for Racial Equity*.) Verdis Robinson continues his erudite series of conversations about race, and how to talk about race effectively. The Jim and Eunice Eckberg Film Series adds more opportunities for education. Elizabeth Osta and Theo Munson, our FIRE "Chiefs", as I call them, are definitely working with the fire of commitment.

We continue working with Spiritus Christi's group, SPARC, on various projects in the city. Please contact FIRE for more information, or to inquire about how you can participate. (FIRE@uuroc.org).

The Social Justice Circles continue to feed the hungry, supporting rural and migrant workers, actively working on environmental issues, and adding warmth by crafting blankets. Even our Animal Ministry group continues to be on the alert for the needs of our furry friends and companions. Sadly, our School #7 activities have been curtailed due to the pandemic.

In short, though, we're thriving. We persevere! We resist, we persist, and most importantly, we INSIST. We insist on taking action when and where we can despite the pandemic, and especially in the face of the bigger picture over the past several months. Thank you, each one of you, for your continued efforts, for raising your voices, and for participating in the most important action: walking toward peace, every day. We are grateful.

If you are interested in participating in FIAC, contact FIAC@uuroc.org. ❖

EcoJustice News

Submitted by Sarah Singal

EcoJustice Group members ask you to remind your legislators of the urgency of the climate crisis and the need for action. The Climate and Community Investment Act (CCIA) endorsed by NY Climate and Faith groups* is a zero-sum bill, raising money to invest in frontline communities and green jobs, paid for by the biggest polluters. Learn more: <https://www.nyrenews.org/ccia>.

Please consider your support of this bill and taking action to get it into the budget. Now is the time, with Democratic majorities in both State Assembly and Senate. Take a couple minutes and let your representative know: nyrenews.org/call-your-reps. We can do this!

Also, join New Yorkers of all faiths on March 11 for the Faith Day of Action. Any action will do: public prayers, letter-writing campaign, letters to the editor, protest—anything to get legislators to see religious folk are paying attention to the CCIA and as people of faith, they care. Find tools and resources here: newyorkipl.org/faith-day-of-action-march-11-2021/. ❖

* NYRENEWS, *The Climate Accelerator*, Rochester Area Interfaith Climate Action (RAICA), Jewish Climate Action of NYC, NY Interfaith Power and Light, Green Faith, The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester and others

Interfaith Impact: *Legislative Briefing*

Submitted by Dick Gilbert

Are you curious about the new NYS legislators? The local Interfaith IMPACT of NYS has put together a program "Zooming in on Albany: Our New Legislators Speak" featuring recently elected members of the NYS Senate and Assembly from this area, including Senators Samra Brouk and Jeremy Cooney, and Assembly members Sarah Clark, Jen Lunsford, and Demond Meeks.

Join us for this year's Annual Briefing of Interfaith Impact of NYS, Rochester Chapter on Sunday, March 14 at 2pm via Zoom. They will share priority issues for the Senate and Assembly with remarks followed by a Q&A. Registration required: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_kQ1cmUsoRoi9O-r_o5Eu5w. ❖

Race in a Brave Space (RiBS)

Dialogues with Verdis L. Robinson

This series of dialogues creates a brave space to learn, grow, and act toward antiracism—all in the context of our UU principles—especially concerning the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Participants will engage in real talk about race in relationship to (1) American History, (2) the Unitarian Universalist faith, (3) local Rochester history, and (4) an inspiring meditation to lift up racial justice.

All sessions will be virtual from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Dialogue #1:

“What My History Teacher Never Taught Me” – Friday, October 16

Drawing from Mr. Robinson’s teaching African American history and decolonizing American history, we will explore hard truths by lifting up marginalized voices and experiences. We will learn what was intentionally left out of the historical narrative, why, and what to do about it.

Dialogue #2:

“Wilderness Journey” – Friday, November 13

Participants will preview the film, *Wilderness Journey: The Struggle for Black Empowerment and Racial Justice within the Unitarian Universalist Association, 1967-1970* (found on YouTube). We will reflect together on its lessons, what is currently plaguing our religious tradition, and imagine what our future as UUs could look like.

Dialogue #3:

Rochester’s History of Systemic Racism – Friday, January 22, 2021

From the fiery destruction of Frederick Douglass’ home to the uprising in July 1964 to the perpetuation of residential segregation, we will explore the systemic racism in Rochester’s history. What have we really learned? What is being done? What is OUR vision for our community?

Dialogue #4:

Enduring the Long Night: A Meditation – Friday, March 19, 2021

Mr. Robinson will share an interpretation of Psalm 30:5 “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” What does it take for the joy to come? We will create a collective meditation on enduring the long night of racism to get to that glorious morning together.



Verdis Robinson’s guest leadership is being sponsored by the FIRE team of the First Universalist Church. Congregational members will receive Zoom links to the virtual seminars.

To make a donation, send a check to 150 S. Clinton Ave, Rochester NY 14604, or click the donate button on uuroc.org at the top or bottom of the page. Thank you!



2021 Eunice and Jim Eckberg Racial Justice Memorial Film Series

Third Sundays, 2-3:30 p.m.

This film series is named in memory of two beloved First Universalist members who shared an enduring quest for racial justice throughout their years together. Films are to be viewed on your own prior to the Zoom discussion on the date specified. Please view the film BEFORE the discussion to assure a quality experience.

October 18—A Tale of Two Schools (2017, 61 min, YouTube): An intimate and compelling documentary, narrated by Morgan Freeman, about children at risk in two struggling schools and the parents and teachers who care about them.

November 15—I Am Not Your Negro (2017, 1 hr. 33 min, Netflix, Amazon): Based on James Baldwin's unfinished book, this visual essay explores racism through the stories of Medgar Evers, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr.

January 17—The Hate You Give (2018, 2 hr.13 min, Hulu, HBO, You Tube, Amazon Prime): The uneasy balance between two worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer.

February 21—12 Years a Slave (2013, 134 min, Netflix, Amazon Prime): This film "drives straight into the heart of the cruelties of oppression" (the NYTimes) and was an Academy Award Best Picture Winner.

March 21—Selma (2019, 2 hrs. 8 min, Netflix, Amazon): Chronicles the tumultuous three months in 1965 when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led a dangerous campaign and epic march from Selma to Montgomery to secure equal voting rights in the face of violent opposition. Directed by Ava DuVernay.

April 18—What Happened, Miss Simone? (2015, 1 hr. 41 min, Amazon Prime, Netflix): Classical pianist, dive-bar chanteuse, black power icon and legendary artist Nina Simone lived a life of brutal honesty and musical genius. Meet the mother, the activist, the tortured soul, and the legendary songstress.





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 Campbell

Minister of Life Span Faith Development |
Rev. Michelle Yates

Music Director | Brock Tjosvold

Office Manager | Emma Barry

Nursery Care Providers |
Carol Williams & Sundae Hodge

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More info is available on our website: uuroc.org

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