



Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY

May 2017

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Sunday Services | May 2017

May 7 | *Talking the Walk: Why do we do what we do to repair the world?*

How often have we been challenged to “walk the talk,” to live out our faith? But how often have we been challenged to “talk the walk,” to understand and articulate the spiritual and moral dimensions of why we do what we do?

- Rev. Richard S. Gilbert

May 14 | *Our Foremothers*

On Mother's Day, we remember the words and deeds of Universalist women.

- Rev. Celie Katovitch

May 21 | *Grace*

This year's auction sermon.

- Rev. Celie Katovitch

May 28 | *No Justice, No Peace*

On a day set apart for remembering the cost of war in human lives, let us also consider the cost of peace. What does it mean to be a peaceful people, a people of peace, amidst the crisis of injustice?

- Eileen Casey Campbell, UU candidate for ministry and recent graduate of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School

Flower Communion

Submitted by Rev. Celie Katovitch

Sunday, June 4th -- Please bring a flower or two to share as part of this annual ritual.

The ceremony will also include a ritual of Child Dedication (a blessing welcoming children into our community). If you would like your child to participate, please let Rev. Celie know by May 21st (minister@uuroc.org). This is also a special year because it is the 95th anniversary of the institution of Flower Communion by Norbert Capek, a Czech Unitarian minister and martyr in World War II. UU congregations all across the country will celebrate on this day, in solidarity with Capek's congregation in Prague. It's a lovely chance to lift up gratitude for our global UU family. ❖





Pastor's Perspective

Message from Rev. Celie Katovitch

Dear friends,

I want to thank you for the graceful way you received the announcement of my departure. While I was hesitant to use this space for what I know is in many ways a sad topic, I wanted to say again how wonderful I believe this congregation to be, and what a privilege it has been to serve you. I also feel it is important to reiterate a couple of other things. First and foremost among them is, I love you. I have, and will always have, deep affection for this church and for each of you. Secondly, you did not do anything wrong. This was a very, very hard decision, and came solely from a realization about the theological heart of my own calling: specifically, that it was more decisively centered in theistic and Christian perspectives than I realized three years ago. After wrestling with this a long time, it became clear that - for me, given the shape of my own devotional and liturgical life - following that calling meant it was time to go. That decision was not one I came to lightly, or without sorrow. Finally, I wanted to name the fact that it is okay to be upset, it is okay to be sad, and it is okay to be angry. I say this here not because I think you need my permission-- of course you don't need anyone's permission to feel the way you feel! --but because it can be easy to start telling ourselves we "shouldn't" feel a certain way, or that some feelings are invalid or unwelcome. This isn't the case. While I deeply regret having caused any part of that sadness or anger, I honor those feelings and hope you will honor them in yourself when and if they arise.

It is also okay to be hopeful. The growth of this congregation over the past several years is due to YOU. You are on a good road and the future is bright. And I do hope we can be joyful at times too-- joyful for the time we have together in May and June, and for all we have to celebrate from the past three years.

"Weeping endures for a night, but joy comes in the morning," says the Psalmist. I believe it will be so, for all of us.

With love always,

- Celie ❖

Extended Office Hours

In addition to my regular community office hours at Java's Cafe on Gibbs Street, Thursdays from 1-2, I will be offering extended community office hours at the following locations and times:

Wednesday May 17th, 10-noon, New Roots
Coffeehouse in Greece

Tuesday June 6th, 5-7, Finger Lakes Coffee Roasters in
Pittsford

It is okay to come with something in particular that is on your mind, or just to talk without any specific agenda. Please know that I am available to meet one-on-one as well.

With love,

--Celie ❖

Ministerial Study Leave

Rev. Celie will be away May 3rd - 10th to complete the second of two required residencies for a program in spiritual direction. She can be reached in cases of pastoral emergency; please contact Ed Deller at eadeller@rochester.rr.com or contact the church office at 546-2826. ❖

Denominational Developments

This is a difficult but important time in our denomination. This is a good season to read your UU World to keep apprised of the important conversations about hiring practices at our Unitarian Universalist Association, as well as wider discussions of anti-racism in our denomination. The World staff has offered a helpful summary here: <http://bit.ly/2p16sZD>. ❖



Walking Together

Submitted by Rev. Michelle Yates, Director of Life Span Faith Development

Our Faith Development theme for March comes from the eighth line of our Affirmation of Faith that we say during service each week: **“...with the source and meaning of life.”**

To you, what is the “source and meaning of life?”

How can you grow into harmony with it?

No quick or easy answers this month. These are some of the biggest questions of all.

It reminds me of a song from our teal hymnbook that goes, “Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going? Mystery, mystery, life is a riddle and a mystery.”

I personally describe “spirituality” as the search for and nurturing of that which gives meaning and purpose to your life. Thus, reflecting on the “source of life” could be in many ways a separate exploration from the “meaning of life.”

This month in Children’s Worship we aim to explore this mystery through all the sources of life we can think of: ancestors, evolution, life cycles, food cycles, love, mystery, how “God” might be an answer for some people, or how some people might use the word “god” interchangeably with words like Love and Mystery. Can you think of others?

We’ll also try to explore what gives “meaning” to people’s lives. Perhaps helping others, sharing love or knowledge, enjoying the world, family, working to make the world a better place... What else can you think of?

How might your answers to these questions affect the way you see the world, or the choices you make?

If you like to keep things simple (and yet still complex) you could just say Love.

Love is the source. Love is the meaning. Love is the call and the response. ❖

UUA General Assembly 2017

Submitted by Shirley Bond

The UUA General Assembly will be held in New Orleans this year. June 21st till the 25th. Details are on the UUA website: www.uua.org/ga/program/schedule.

Everyone who has gone raves about what a wonderful experience it is.

If you are interested please talk to Shirley Bond (bondshirl1@gmail.com) and she will answer your questions or point you in the right direction.

Welcome New Members!

Submitted by Peter Perine

On Membership Sunday, April 2, we welcomed a total of eighteen new members into our Church family. About half of the group had completed our annual Path To Membership orientation program which took place on the previous day; the remainder had “signed the book” earlier in the Church year. Following the Sunday service, a reception was held in the Clara Barton Lounge.

Please extend the “hand of fellowship” to each of our new members, introduce yourself if you don’t already know them, and add your personal welcome to: Ruthlee Barton, Shamiah DiFrancesco, Deborah Cheek, Cezanne Enriquez, Amanda Proctor, Emerson Finkle, Rachel Irato, Jason Long, Theo and Steve Munson, Tess and Kevin McFarland-Porter, Kathi and Jim Milch, Richard Reed, Jodi and Chris Reynolds, and Kate Young. ❖



Submitted by Sarah Singal


Urban Agriculture Working Group 2017 Conference

Rochester's second annual Urban Agriculture Conference will be held on May 13, 2017 from 10 to 4. It will be held at School 34, 530 Lexington Avenue. There will be hands-on workshops, demonstrations, tours, seed swaps and conversations for Rochester's community gardeners and urban farmers. All groups, individuals and skill levels are welcome and lunch is provided. Tickets are on a sliding scale, maximum \$10 a person. No one will be turned away for inability to pay. For information and tickets, go to Facebook. If interested please contact ssingal@rochester.rr.com.

First Universalist's Gardens

May will undoubtedly be the time for a planning session and a planting session for the Garden Committee. The Garden Committee is responsible for flower and vegetable gardens, and planters along Court Street. We are always happy to have new members and you may participate in ways that are best for you and your schedule. As you work in the flowers along Court Street you will hear compliments from passersby, who really appreciate the beauty of the blossoms and also the wisdom from the wayside pulpit. Interested? Contact ssingal@rochester.rr.com. ❖

More Mindfulness, Less Monkey Mind: Tools You Can Use

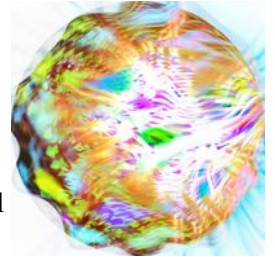


Submitted by Joy Leccese

“Back by popular demand” – More exploration of Mindfulness and Meditation, and why Buddhist psychology is taking westerners by storm. Why it's not about religion or faith, it's about how we think. We'll explore some of the world's leading thinkers and luminaries who can guide us through troubling mindsets to a place of inner peace: it's not your grandmother's chicken soup, but it's close! Saturday, May 20th, 9:30 - noon. Email Joy Leccese with questions: coachingjoy@gmail.com. ❖

A Non-Scientist's View of Climate Change

Submitted by Juanita Ball



Have you ever wondered why we are having Polar Vortexes if we have Global Warming? What the difference is between Weather and Climate and why people are so concerned about Climate Change anyway?

Weather is what happened yesterday – Sunny, 35; what is happening today – Cloudy, 30; and what will probably happen tomorrow – Snowing, 20. Weather is predictable based on observation – strong winds are heading south from Canada – and based on past weather data – when wind heads south from Canada in February, usually the temperature drops, and it picks up moisture when it crosses the lake so we expect snow and temperatures in the 20s (because that's what happened the last fifty Februarys).

Climate is the average of what happened in the past over an extended period of time. Climate is not predictable, it is past history. Miami, Florida has a warm climate; Rochester is in a temperate climate zone. We have, (or had) four seasons generally of equal length. Warm climates may have only two seasons – a wet season and a dry season. Cold climates may also have only two seasons – winter and summer.

Climate Change is normal but usually occurs over thousands of years. Global warming has caused the climate to change dramatically in less than two hundred years. We can no longer predict the weather based on weather data. Climate zones are changing. This affects the growing season of food crops, the movement of insect pests and disease carriers (northward). It also affects the temperature of the oceans – warmer water means stronger hurricanes; the direction and stability of the jet stream – no rain over California, polar vortexes over Rochester; and the melting rate of polar ice caps and glaciers – higher sea levels and storm surges, (Super storm Sandy).

Climate change is happening much quicker than scientists thought, leaving us and other living creatures little or no time to adjust. This is why people are concerned. ❖

How would you do?

Submitted by Marti Eggers

You're 13 years old; your body is changing. Your family is homeless; you sleep in the family car every night with your parents and two siblings. It's hot. You're embarrassed and ashamed. You don't want anyone at school to know.

- How do you take care of your personal needs (washing up, brushing your teeth, washing your hair?)
- How do you get clean clothes?
- How do you do your homework?
- How do you get to school, or do you?
- What do you say when your friends ask if they can come over to your house to play?



A growing number of families in the Rochester area are homeless, many of them resorting to sleeping in their cars. RAIHN, the Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network, is one of the few shelters in Rochester that take families, keeping them together at a time of crisis. RAIHN Car City 2017 is a fundraiser as well as a way to shed light

on homelessness in our own community. Families, youth groups and other teams are invited sleep in their cars at Asbury Methodist Church on Saturday night, May 6th. There will be dinner provided by Tasteful Connections as well as evening activities, including car-a-oke, a sundae bar, and bedtime yoga. In addition, a panel of RAIHN graduates will speak about their experiences. Photography by Michele Ashley, a celebrated documentary photographer, will also be displayed.

If you don't want to sleep in your car but want to support RAIHN Car City, join Team VirtUUal. Here's how: Go directly to the Team VirtUUal page (<http://bit.ly/2nEViv2>) and click on the *Donate Now* button.

The rest is up to you. A donation of \$30 or more will admit you to the dinner and evening activities as well as the overnight (if you so choose!). Your donation in any amount will be gratefully received and will directly help families get home for good. ❖



First Universalist is proud to support Roc/ACTS!

Submitted by Shirley Bond

As most of you may know we joined this fledgling organization two years ago. Since that time 22 faith organizations have "religiously" put their efforts and talents together to help eliminate structural racism in the City of Rochester. The key word here is TOGETHER! Part of the mission of Roc/ACTS is to have a growing understanding of racism as a barrier to effective diversity.



With that goal in mind, we were invited to a two-day training conference held in Brighton and headed by Dr. Ken Hardy. It turned out to be an enlightening learning experience. It was a different experience to be in a room full of 200 people who asked each other honest questions. I thank St. Joseph's Neighborhood Association, United Way, and others for their sponsorship.

This is a two-year program and Dr. Hardy will be back in September to make sure we are all on track. Roc/ACTS is part of the national organization Gamaliel (the same organization that trained President Obama in Chicago). We will be busy hosting a five-day teach-in in the fall at RIT.

We also wanted to let you know that Roc/ACTS is hosting a FUNraising Reception, Silent Auction and Basket Raffle on Sunday, May 21st from 3:30 to 5:30 at St. John the Evangelist Church, 553 Humboldt St.

Becky Elwell and I have been very involved in this organization and we are proud to say that we had over 1,000 petitions signed for "Raise the Age." We contributed a small part in having the law passed!

You will be hearing more from us with updates, so stay tuned and thank you for your support. ❖

Living Our Values, Making A Difference

Submitted by *Newcomb Losh*

Raise the Age Rally - Members and friends of Roc/ACTS met at NYS Sen. Rich Funke's Fairport office on March 16 to press for Raise the Age legislation to stop sending minors to adult courts and prisons. Participants included our own **Dick Gilbert** (in the light-colored jacket) and **Carole Hoffman** (not pictured). ▼

Photographer Unknown



RAIHN Week - The end of March brought RAIHN Week to our church, where meals and a warm place to sleep were provided to families who were temporarily homeless. The dinner preparers and servers on April 1 were (l to r) **Carol Zimmerlin**, **Marie Sidoti**, **Richard Reed** and **Jody Brennan**. ▼



Rally for José Coyote Perez - **Connie Valk** and **Lyle Jenks** brought signs supporting the freeing of José Coyote Perez, a guest dairy farm worker and migrant worker activist, incarcerated because a tipster said "he may have done something bad." ▼



From the Communications Committee

Submitted by *Lisa Gwinner*

Are you on Facebook? Do you Tweet? If so, then you probably have been instrumental in getting the word out about our growing congregation, and our loving faith that is inclusive rather than exclusive.

If you are still learning about the world of social media you may not realise how easy it is to get our message out to the community. If you share our church's Facebook posts, and retweet our twitter posts, the circle of information grows larger and larger. It is really simple, and very effective.

Another thing we all can do to move the message along is to make sure Melissa Davies, our Office Manager & author of many of our Facebook posts & tweets, knows when events of note are happening. Photos of activities involving church members would also be very welcome additions to the Facebook page, as would inspirational quotes and poetry that reflect our UU faith.

Another great idea for spreading our church's activities to the community is to make a Facebook post using the church's location. If you are attending an event as a representative of the church, you can post from the event's location and tag the church. These posts will show up in the church's timeline as well.

If you'd like to contribute to our social media efforts, please email Melissa at office@uuroc.org. Thanks in advance for helping us! ❖

Follow us!



<https://www.facebook.com/UURoc/>



<https://twitter.com/UURoc>

Have an action photo or two of our members and friends being inclusive, living our Unitarian Universalist values or making a difference? Send them to Newcomb Losh at jnewcomb.losh@yahoo.com.

All photos by Newcomb Losh unless otherwise noted.

Washington Square Park Community Association

Submitted by Newcomb Losh

Some of you may know that we are, or rather were, members of the informal Washington Square Park Neighborhood Association (WSPNA), headed by Jason Schwingle.

I say “were,” because WSPNA has recently incorporated as WSPCA – Washington Square Park Community Association – as a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. The shift from neighborhood to community reflects an appreciation of the importance of interconnectedness.

WSPCA’s vision is to revitalize and reinvigorate Washington Square Park, making it a safer and more appealing place to live, work and visit. Its mission is to promote a vibrant and engaged community centered on Washington Square Park and the surrounding area.

WSPCA has an 11-member Board of Directors with representation from GEVA Theatre, Excellus, ESL, Buckingham Properties, Capron Lofts, First Universalist Church, Rochester Public Library-Central Library, and the Military History Society of Rochester.

Jason is the President of the Board. I am the Vice-President. He and I began working together last summer, along with Malcolm Matthews of St. Mary’s Church, to develop a music festival in Washington Square Park. The music fest idea came from our congregation’s 2015 Love Reaches Out workshops. We realized, as we worked, that this festival would be better overseen by a neighborhood than by a couple of neighbors.

Currently, the board is developing business plans, fundraising, and infrastructure to assure long term success.

Come talk to me, Newcomb Losh, if you have comments, suggestions, concerns, or questions.

An adventure awaits! ❖



Finance Committee News

Submitted by Ann Rhody

Thanks for your help - to build the land we seek! Our Stewardship campaign, *We'll Build a Land*, has been a success. As of this writing, we have received 86 pledges for a total of \$189,248. This includes many increases in pledges, and 8 new pledges! Last year’s total was \$191,000 and we are still expecting pledges from some members who pledged last year. With these included, we should be able to fund our needs for the 2017-18 church year. It is not ever too late, or too little, to pledge! If you’d like to be included in the pledge drive, please contact Bill Jones or Ann Rhody, or pledge online at uuroc.org/stewardship.

A very special thank you to our Stewardship Co-Chairs, Rachael Baldanza and Heather Jones. Together they provided the work and leadership to inspire us to support this beloved community. Be sure to give them a special pat on the back for their help!

The third quarter finance reports are out... and the results are encouraging. Although several costs are running higher than we anticipated, these are more than offset by excellent income, especially with building rental and parking. We are poised to finish the fiscal year on June 30th in the black.

The Finance Committee is pleased to welcome Beth Ares, who will be our Payroll and Benefit Coordinator. Beth will provide a vital connection between the Finance and Personnel Committees, and will bring her expertise in labor law to the table. Thank you, Beth!

Looking to get involved -- but not *too* time-committed? The finance committee would love to welcome some new members! Meetings are as needed, a few times a year, with much electronic communication in the interim. We work on budgeting, fund-raising projects, investments, and stewardship, and advise the Board of Trustees on financial matters. Believe it or not, we have fun and develop great camaraderie as we do it! Please contact Ann Rhody if you’d like to join us or need to know more. ❖

Drop-In Discussion Schedule

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

Drop-in discussions are held at 9:15 a.m. (except during the summer) each Sunday in the Chalice Room 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.

May 7 | *The State of the State, According to Interfaith Impact.* Dick Gilbert, President of Interfaith Impact of NYS, will describe the work of IINYS in Albany and around the state. He will touch on such issues as reproductive freedom, eco-justice, church/state separation and fair taxation, among others. He welcomes involvement by members and friends of this congregation.



May 14 | *The Supernatural.* Have you ever had a paranormal experience—ghosts, miraculous healing, telepathy, foreknowledge of the future? Has a friend ever told you about such an experience? What was your attitude? Why? Can you be religious without belief in the supernatural? Phil Ebersole will lead a discussion.

May 21 | *Women's Reproductive Health in 2017.* Stephanie Gerspacher, public affairs organizer at Planned Parenthood of Central & Western New York, will discuss policy concerning women's reproductive health in 2017. She will touch on state and federal issues impacting reproductive rights and freedom.



May 28 | *Open forum discussion.* No set topic.

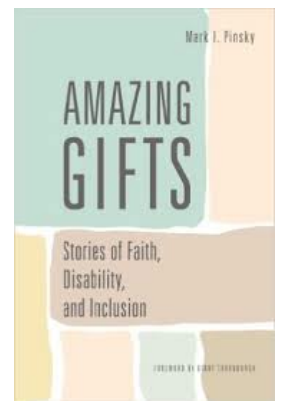
If you wish to have a topic discussed or, better still, are willing to lead a discussion, speak to Phil Ebersole. ❖

Library News

Submitted by Keith Stott

Amazing Gifts

One of the newest books in our church library is Mark Pinsky's *Amazing Gifts: Stories of Faith, Disability, and Inclusion*. These are stories of sixty-four people with disabilities, their family members, and their congregations. More than fifty million people live with physical, sensory, psychiatric, and intellectual disabilities. While physical disabilities are evident, many disabilities are hidden at first sight.



The book is divided into three parts:

Empowering People and Congregations
Ministry by People with Disabilities
Family Members in Ministry

Consider this – when would the Lord's Prayer be recited more slowly than usual? Perhaps in a congregation where members have difficulty speaking. Call number is **259 P**. ❖

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The First Universalist Church library and bookstore are open each Sunday, except in the summer, during coffee hour for browsing, borrowing, and buying.

The books along the wall shelves are part of our lending library. Books may be borrowed for four weeks by members, and also by friends who have attended long enough to have name tags. If you have an overdue book, we'd appreciate your returning it.

The books on the freestanding shelves are part of our bookstore. We have donated books for sale for 50 cents each and purchased books for sale at half price. We also have a shelf of free children's books and a free magazine exchange. We appreciate donations of books in good condition that you think others would be interested in reading. ❖

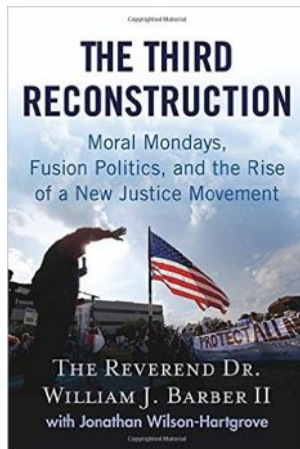
UU Common Read Book Discussion

Continues May 4th & May 18th from 6-8 pm in the Chalice Room.

The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement, by Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II with Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove.

The book tells the story of the Moral Mondays movement, and embeds the current movement in the larger story of racial and economic justice movements since the Civil War. Books can be purchased or ordered through the church bookstore.

Facilitated by Rev. Michelle Yates, Phil Ebersole, and Suzie Gutierrez. Please contact Rev. Michelle at edu@uuroc.org with questions and interest. ❖



House Committee News

Submitted by Tom Ruganis

May is here and that means our spring clean-up day isn't far away! Please consider stopping by on Saturday, May 13th at approximately 9 am to help keep our building beautiful. In addition to thorough cleaning, there are a few repair projects planned. If there's anything you would like to see addressed please let the House Committee know.

The Clara Barton Lounge renovation project has completed a major milestone with the plan approval by the Church Board. Several orders have already been placed for summer delivery. It is anticipated that the disruption to Sunday services will be minimal. Please continue to stay tuned.

As always, if you are interested in the above, please contact anyone on the committee. The Committee is currently: Tom Ruganis, Chair (tom.ruganis@frontier.com), Sarah Singal, Marcy Klein, Michael Scott, Ed Deller and Shirley Bond. We would love to hear from you! ❖

Social Justice Plate News

Submitted by Shirley Bond

The Social Justice Plate Committee is pleased to announce that the collection for Mary's Place was \$573.00. That is amazingly generous and will be gratefully received by them. It is an uncertain time for refugees, as we all know.

Our May 21st collection will be for GIRLS ROCK! Rochester. This organization is a rock 'n roll camp geared towards empowering girls and trans youth through music and using creativity and performance as tools for cultivating self-confidence. The committee checked out this organization via an art exhibit and was amazed and inspired by their work. Further information can be obtained by visiting girlsrockrochester.org. The committee wishes to thank the whole congregation for their support. We ROCK too! ❖



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 10:30am Sundays

Minister | Rev. Celie Katovitch

Director of Life Span Faith Development | Rev. Michelle Yates

Music Director | Stacey Yang

Sexton | Brandon Fagan

Nursery Care Provider | Carol Williams & Jameelah Barnes

Office Administrator | Melissa Davies

Office hours, Tuesday - Friday, 9-3:15. Closed Mondays. Telephone 585.546.2826

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Editor, *This Week at First Universalist* (digital) and monthly newsletter *Our Outlook*: Melissa Davies.

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