



Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

October 2014

Minister

Rev. Celie Katovitch
minister@uuroc.org

Director of Music

Bryan Holten
music@uuroc.org

**Director of Life Span
Faith Development**

Michelle Yates
edu@uuroc.org

Office Administrator

Kris White
585.546.2826
office@uuroc.org

Our Outlook

Newsletter Editor

David Damico
uurocnews@gmail.com

First Universalist Church

150 South Clinton Avenue
(corner of Court St.)
Rochester, NY 14604

Visit us online www.uuroc.org

Inside

Pastor's Ponderings	Pg. 2
Walking Together-RE	Pg. 3
PACT Article	Pg. 3
RAIHN Q and A	Pg. 4
SCHOOL 7	Pg. 4
Drop-In Discussions	Pg. 5
Fall Finance Notes	Pg. 5
Auld Lang Syne	Pg. 6
Leadership Retreat	Pg. 6
House News	Pg. 7

Sunday Services | October 2014

October 5 | *A Sacred-Space Odyssey*

As we enter the final weeks of our PACT campaign, we'll consider a few stories from our history in this space, and listen for what guidance they might give us going forward.

-Celie Katovitch



October 12 | *Religion: It's All In Your Imagination*

October, with its culmination in Halloween, gives our kids freedom to imagine a world pervaded by enchantment. Today we will follow their lead, and consider the role of the religious imagination.

-Celie Katovitch



October 19 | *Miraculous Community*

This *Bread Sunday*, we'll celebrate what caring community makes possible.
Celie Katovitch



October 26 | *Connecting Dots*

The way we connect things is telling. Connections create patterns that not only define us, but form our insight. We use connection to derive meaning and create texture in our lives. I will explore ways dots get connected and will offer a perspective on why our approach to connecting them matters.

-Eric Van Dusen



Worship service begins at 10:30am Sundays





Pastor's Ponderings

Message from Rev. Celie Katovitch

Every few years, I stumble upon a work by the contemporary American poet Stanley Kunitz called "The Testing Tree." It is a long, complex, and--frankly--difficult poem. Yet, to me it is difficult in the way that sacred texts often are, and should be. Its layers and complexity ask me, each time I happen upon it, to hear the words a little differently than last time. What struck me most in my recent reading of this poem was the beautiful language of an early passage, in which Kunitz describes taking a walk through woods and fields, as his childhood self experienced that activity:

“...[D]awdling came natural
across a nettled field
riddled with rabbit-life
where the bees sank sugar-wells
in the trunks of the maples
and a stringy old lilac
more than two stories tall
blazing with mildew...
All of it happened slow:
brushing the stickseed off,
wading through jewelweed
spotting the print of the deer...
Once I owned the key
to a trail
thickened with mosses
where flickering presences
gave me right of passage...
Past the abandoned quarry
where the pale sun bobbed
in the sump of the granite,
past copperhead ledge,
where the ferns gave foothold,
I walked, deliberate...”

The quality of his attention, his memory of the child's ability to walk "slow, dawdling.. [and] deliberate," speaks to me during this vibrant Fall.

And then I come to a single line of this poem that makes my breath catch in my throat every time I read it, without fail. About the walks he took, observing the richness of his world, Kunitz writes, "I had kept my appointment."

Seeing those words now, I again shiver at their power. Maybe it's because I know my own tendency to let appointments, obligations, and tasks of other kinds crowd out those times when I allow myself simply to take in--really take in-- the world around me, in gratitude and wonder. Many of those obligations are indeed important, but time devoted just to being is no less essential.

In these days of Fall, I hope that each of you will find moments to let those spiritual gifts of wonder and gratitude blossom within you. May you "keep your appointment" with the beauty of creation.

In faith, – **Celie** ❖

Celie's Office Hours For The Fall:

Ministry is a profession that does not easily lend itself to set-in-stone hours, as pastoral and community needs arise ad hoc, and meetings vary from week to week. The ideal way to arrange a conversation, then, is always by calling or e-mailing me to set up an appointment. However, I will also plan to keep the following "drop in" office hours. (As much as is possible, I will announce in the prior week's e-Outlook if there is to be a change.)

First Thursday of the month

1–3 at Java's Cafe on Gibbs St.

All other Thursdays

9:15–11:45 at the church

Sundays when I am preaching

12–1 ❖

Annual Leadership Assembly, October 18

Submitted by Ed Deller, Board President

First Universalists's annual Leadership Assembly will be held Saturday, October 18. The tentative time is 9am–Noon. All committee chairs, board members and others in church leadership roles are encouraged to attend. More details to follow. ❖



Walking Together:

Director of Life Span Faith Development

Submitted by Michelle Yates, DRE

On the verge of Halloween, brainstorming costume ideas with my young trick-or-treaters, I am amazed by the “spiritual opportunity” the modern tradition of Halloween offers for some young children in our country. The sky is the limit as to what you can “be” while walking among the ghosts and ghoulies of the world. It’s a chance to identify with your alter-ego; the character or person who most inspires you with pride, confidence, self-worth, and fearlessness. You can be bigger, stronger or smarter than that which scares you the most. For my kids it is not only a costume to wear once but many times for dress up; to “try on” the identity and see how it fits in many different scenarios.

How do each of us choose our costume, mask, alter-ego or identity as we prepare to walk out into a world that can be a scary place? In our daily interactions, do we wonder what each encounter will bring, “a trick or a treat?” How do we prepare ourselves in order to extract what is best and sweetest from the world and our neighbors?

One great joy of our free faith is that we can “try on” many ways of being with each other and the world. We can “try on” different beliefs to see which fit us best. We endeavor to build a community where we feel safe being our true selves; a place where we can be vulnerable.

I hope that you will join in our various opportunities to build faith and community this month. In October, we kick off our Multigenerational Cozy Supper Conversations! The holidays are an exciting time to lead Children’s Worship or tell the Story for All Ages. Your talents and presence are a treat! Try something new and see how it fits! In our church community or out in the world, “what do you want to be this year?”

Yours in Faith,
Michelle ❖
edu@uuroc.org



Preserving a Cultural Treasure (PACT) a Success:

New Pledges Placed in Designated Building Fund

Submitted by Kathy Russell and Connie Valk, co-chairs of gifts

We have recently met our goal through generous gifts from congregation members in the Major Gifts phase of the PACT campaign --including the \$100,000 matching gift given by Dick Brush, a New York Landmarks Conservancy Sacred Site grant of \$8000 and \$20,000 from Rochester Area Community Foundation. You are invited to join those who have already made a pledge to PACT and add to the established building fund begun with a bequeath from Beryl Haas. Instead of scrambling for funds for regular building maintenance, your gift will support a legacy to allow ourselves the energy to focus on our mission to “nurture the spirit and serve the community”.



Our hope is that everyone in the congregation, who is financially able, however modestly, will be part of this effort to preserve our “downtown gem”. We would like you to pledge to give what you can.

Donations to PACT can be made over time - up to five years. If you did not receive a pledge card in the mail, we have extras! They are in an envelope outside the church office. ❖

The Lunch Bunch Gathers!

The first Sunday Lunch Bunch outing of the season will be at

Astoria (Mediterranean menu)
651 Monroe Avenue (near intersection with Boardman)
Sunday, October 19, at 12:30.

Everyone is welcome!

Joyce Gilbert ❖

RAIHN Q & A



Q. What is RAIHN anyway?

A. *RAIHN (the Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network)*, is a consortium of 14 faith communities that host families in temporary need of housing, and 32 faith communities that provide volunteers and other support to the host congregations.

Q. Why is RAIHN needed? Aren't there shelters in our community?

A. There are shelters for men and shelters for women, but there are very few safe places where families with children can stay together. The RAIHN program keeps families together while also helping them get back on their feet and into a home again.

Q. What part does First Universalist play in this?

A. First Universalist is a Host Congregation. St. Mary's, Aldersgate United Methodist Church of Greece and the Church of Love Faith Center are our support congregations. Volunteers from all four congregations work together in a variety of tasks before, during and after a Host Week.

Q. What happens during a Host Week?

A. Families arrive at our church on Sunday afternoon with their belongings and are greeted by volunteers who help them settle into one of the RE rooms that will serve as their home during the week. Families spend their days at the RAIHN Center where they get help looking for housing and, for some, new employment. At the end of each day, families return to First Universalist. Volunteers prepare and serve a hot evening meal, help with homework, offer a lap, a story and a hug, a listening ear, a word of encouragement, overnight presence, breakfast and whatever else might be needed before the families return to their jobs or to the Center for another day of hard work. Families move on to the next Host Congregation on the following Sunday.

Q. How many volunteers does it take for a Host Week?

A. There are over 80 volunteer slots to fill!

Q. How can I volunteer?

A. Volunteers are expected to attend a training/orientation session before participating in a Host Week. Training sessions orient volunteers to the philosophy

of the RAIHN program and provide skills in building appropriate relationships. Ample time is provided for questions and discussion. These sessions are valuable not only for folks new to RAIHN but also for seasoned volunteers.

Q. When is the next training session?

A. October 15th, 7-9 PM at the Church of the Assumption, 20 East Avenue, Fairport

Q. When is the next Host Week?

A. December 14th – 21st

Please consider becoming a RAIHN volunteer, a wonderful way to nurture the spirit and serve the community!

To learn more, contact

Chris DeGolyer, chrisdeg@frontiernet.net ❖



SCHOOL 7

Submitted by Tim Mullins

First Universalist provides tutoring and classroom aides to School 7. Our coordinator is Tim Mullins, who connects volunteers with the teachers who have requested help. Here are some numbers from 2013-2014. Our umbrella organization is Friends of Educational Excellence. See www.educationexcel.org.

Number of church volunteers: 7

Number of non-church volunteers: 21

Number of children receiving help: 155

Grades who had our help: K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Teachers using the program: 21 (40%).

In addition, the church donates back packs in September, food for Thanksgiving dinners, Christmas toys, and mittens, hats and scarves, either hand-made or store-bought, are delivered to the school in January. The school social worker, Mrs. Turner, and parent liaison Mr. Hines, identify needy families at the school and oversee distribution. ❖

Drop-In Discussion, September Schedule

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

Drop-in discussions are held each Sunday at 9:15 a.m. (except in July and August) 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.

October 5 | *Don't Believe Everything You Think!*

You may have noticed troubles in the world. Many stem from disagreement between people who "know" they are right, but who believe opposite "facts." Why should that be? Hank Stone will lead a discussion.

October 12 | *The Divide*

Phil Ebersole will review and lead a discussion of Matt Taibbi's new book about a powerful financial elite escape prosecution, while members of a lower class are denied protection of the law.

October 19 | *Covenants, Not Creeds*

Our First Universalist Church affirmation of faith is a covenant to do certain things, not a creed to which everyone is obligated to pay lip service. Our drop-in discussion group has a reviewable and renewable covenant as to how to conduct discussions. Janet Rothbeind will help us explore the meaning of covenants.

October 26 | *Open forum discussion*

If you have a topic you think should be discussed or want to lead a discussion, speak to Phil Ebersole. ❖

Library News

Submitted by Keith Stott



What helps you move forward? Provides insight? Pleases you? Let Mary Oliver assist and inspire you with her poetry, *New and Selected Poems*. "The Eskimos Have No Word for War" (insight).-"The Sun Reaches Out" (move forward).-"Robert Schumann ... runs up the dark staircase [to Clara], humming" (pleases).- And don't miss "Goldenrod" on pages 17-18. Call number is **811.540** ❖ (you can exchange glances with her on the back cover.)

Fall Finance Notes

Submitted by Ann Rhody

Along with the changing leaves and cooler temperatures, watch for these signs of Fall from your finance team:

- The change drive will take place on November 2 and 9. Save your loose change and bring it to church!
- The annual treasurer's report will be available in late October
- Planning is getting underway for our annual Holiday Shoppe. We'll need contributions of gift items to sell and volunteers to staff the table on Sundays between November 30 and December 21.
- The finance team will be meeting with our advisor to review our portfolio, and will then engage in some dialogue about socially responsible investing.

Watch for updates and information in the weekly announcements and e-Outlook. If you have questions or would like to volunteer to help, please contact Finance chair Ann Rhody at annrhody@yahoo.com. All are welcome, and you don't have to be a "numbers person" to make a big difference to our finance team!

Thanks for everything you do to keep our congregation financially healthy! ❖

Book Club

Submitted by Shirley Bond



The Book club selection for the month of October is:

The First Muslim... The Story of Mohammad
by Leslie Hazelton.

Come and enjoy our casual discussion group.

Sunday October 26th, 12:15 in the second floor adult lounge.

For further information please see or e-mail bondshirl@yahoo or Sarah.Singal@rochester.rr.com ❖

Auld Lang Syne

Submitted by Karen Dau, archivist



LASIRA IMOGENE OSBORN TORREY was a 19th century Universalist who blessed her denomination with nine engaging “Reminiscences of Universalism in Western New-York,” written between 1832 and 1861. She resided for several years in Rochester and writes here about Universalism in the city:

In 1828 for the first time I attended a Universalist meeting in the city (then village) of Rochester, N.Y. Rev. A. [Alfred] Peck preached in the old Court House. There was a small congregation, comparatively. Only four women were present, including my aunt (a Methodist), my mother, and myself. At the intermission, I took occasion to enter into a conversation with the only woman who attended, aside from our company. She said, “I am not a Universalist, but I do like to hear them preach,” adding, “I shall receive a severe reproof, if my friends learn that I have been to this meeting...” On returning (at that time) from meeting, I said to my cousin, a young man, “Why did you not go to our meeting to-day?” “O,” said he, “people in this place think there are none who attend the Universalist meetings, but the very refuse of society.”

In the early part of 1835, Rev. Wm. Andrews preached every Sabbath, for several months, in the Court House in Rochester. A gentleman (resident of that city) of superior information on other subjects, finding I attended the Universalist meetings, inquired of me,

“if the Universalists attended to the ceremony of prayer in their meetings?” He said he always supposed that Universalists never prayed. Indeed, I have been asked that question—“what can Universalists pray for, if there is no endless hell to be saved from!” These persons said they could see no use in prayer; no reason why a person should not go on in the most sinful course; could see no incentive to live a virtuous, Christian life, but the fear of endless pain. A very respectable Presbyterian lady of Rochester, for some cause, supposed I was a Methodist. On my telling her that I was a Universalist in belief, she gave me a very singular look, and said she never had known but one Universalist woman, and she did not believe in any God, or the truth of the Bible. I assured her that “a person who disbelieved the truth of the Bible could not be a Universalist,” and commenced to give her some reasons for thus believing; but she manifested an unwillingness to hear. This was, I think I may say, the usual course which people of opposite sentiments to ours would pursue, in the times of which I am writing: very unwilling to hear our belief explained, but ever ready to condemn our sentiments without knowing why.

What I have said of the darkness which reigned in Rochester is but a fair sample of many another city or village; may I not say of nearly all cities or villages in New York State at that time. And the Empire State was not far behind any other in that respect. ❖



New Leadership Startup Retreat

Submitted by Ed Deller

Not only are we blessed with a new minister, but we also have three new board members (Kitty Forbush, Karen Ruganis and Tim Mullins) and a newly formed Committee on Ministry (Bridget Watts, John Akers, Marie Sidoti and John Wellin). A retreat was held on Saturday September 6 to help clarify roles and responsibilities and to do a bit of team building among these groups. (Note- we are also blessed with Michelle Yates as our new DRE but she was attending an RE workshop at this time.) Evin Carvill-Zeimer, our CERG Program Coordinator, facilitated a thought provoking session which helped identify a number of actions. These included development of a conflict management policy and a behavior covenant for our church as well as further clarification of the minister’s role. These actions will be addressed over the coming months. ❖

House News

October 2014

Submitted by Tom Ruganis

Fall Clean-Up October 4th!

The time has arrived. The fall clean-up day will be Saturday October 4th, starting around 9 am. Please join us as we spend a little time making our beautiful Church even more beautiful. For more information please call Tom Ruganis know at tom.ruganis@frontier.com or call at 746-7796. Hope to see you there. Thanks!

Heating System

The leaks in the steam heating system will be repaired in early September in preparation for the upcoming heating system.

New “Sandwich” Board

If you have not noticed it yet please take a moment to admire the new, weather resistant board outside the Clara Barton Lounge door. Thanks go to Marcy Klein and others for their excellent work!

Elevator Inspection

The annual inspection of our Limited Use, Limited Access elevator was completed and the inspection certificate is available in the office. ❖

Cozy Friday Night Supper, Oct. 17

Submitted by Kathy Russell

Join us for our next Cozy Friday Night Supper with Faith Development 5:30 to 7:30 PM on October 17th. Supper, with a vegan option, is provided. This session will focus on the fifth principle of the UUA – the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large. Sign up on the bulletin board in the Clara Barton Lounge, or contact Kathy Russell by phone, 585-544-2643 or email, krussel6@frontiernet.net. Your RSVP/sign up will allow us to prepare appropriately Child-friendly activities exploring this principle. Please make your request one week in advance.

And for those who like to plan ahead... Future Cozy Friday Night Supper Dates for this church year are Nov 21, Jan 9, and Feb 27. ❖

What's Up With The Roof?

Submitted by Ed Deller

The Exterior Renovation project is well on track. The roof is expected to be completed and scaffolding removed before mid-October. Although there have been a few extra issues to be addressed there have been no big surprises and the schedule and budget are on plan so far.

Window repair and painting are taking a bit longer than planned and so the lower windows may not be completed until next spring. However, the high areas of the church are completed and there will not be a need for scaffolding to reach the lower windows. ❖



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 | Michelle Yates

Music Director | Bryan Holten

Sexton | Brandon Fagan

Nursery Care Provider | Carol Williams

Office Administrator | Kris White

Office hours, Tuesday through Friday, 8:30am–2:45pm. Telephone 585.546.2826

Board Of Trustees

Ed Deller (President), Joy Leccese, Shirley Bond, Michael Scott, Michael VanArsdale, Howard Spindler, Janet Rothbeind.

Editor, Weekly *eOutlook*: Kris White; Monthly paper *Our Outlook*, David Damico/Marcy Klein

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