

Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

January 2012

Sunday Services | January 2012

Jan. 1^{st} | Starting the New Year Gently

Traditional New Year's resolutions have a way of focusing attention on the things that are "wrong" with our lives, and how they might be "fixed". Imagine, instead, that we could focus our attention on what's right, and how to make it richer or deeper. Please give some thought to what you do well, and would like to have more of in your life. Bring that thought with you to church, and consider sharing it with others. Feel free, as well, to bring a poem or reading to share, or a favorite hymn to request (advance notice welcome, but not required).

-- Led by worship associate Michael Scott. Music by Howard Spindler.

Jan. 8th | Janus

According to the ancient Romans, Janus was the god of beginnings and transitions. He was typically depicted with two faces, able to see both the future and the past. Today's service will include a ritual farewell to Sally Hamlin as we look together at the past and toward the future.

-- Rev. Martha Munson

(A reception for Sally follows the service, hosted by the Caring Committee.)

Jan. 15th | Had He Lived

If Martin Luther King were alive today, what might he be saying and preaching? A service for the weekend which marks his birth. -- Rev. Martha Munson

Jan 22nd | Greenbacks vs. Green Future

When people of conscience hope for an economic recovery, what does that hope look like? Sure, when we hope for better days, we dream of electric cars and solar panels and local-organic squashes. But what can we do differently so that we infect all the various pockets of our county and country with our crunchy dreams? (Illustrated with examples involving everything from Kazakstani men to city schools.) -- Santosha Kuykendall

Jan. 29th | To Take Up Space

What does it mean to "occupy" something? What might it mean to occupy Wall Street, or Washington Square Park, or a pew at First Universalist? -- Rev. Martha Munson

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Submitted by Rev. Martha Munson

Walking With You

Who knew? A year ago, I was happily ensconced at North Hills UU in Pittsburgh as their interim minister. I knew that my time there was drawing to a close, and that they would soon call a new minister, but I knew not what would be next for me. A year ago, your settled minister, Sally Hamlin, was about to go off on what was to be a short leave. Neither you nor she knew that she would not really return. And of course none of us knew that I'd be with you for 4 months, and now 6 more. Who knew? The "lesson", the message if you will, is of course that none of us ever knows. In this mortal coil, one simply cannot ever know. So we make plans (as we must) for days and weeks and months ahead. The wise among us surround ourselves with faith, hope and love. Which is to say that we identify where our supports are, we nurture them, as we imagine also that our plans may go awry. To "imagine" is to befriend the notion that tomorrow is not promised to any one of us, not one. So I counsel us each and all to savor each day of this new year and to take every opportunity to speak our thanks and praise. Because, well, who knows?

My plan is to see you at First Universalist in 2012. I look forward to it and thank you for the privilege.

Faithfully,

Martha



R.E.flections

Submitted by Kim Dehon, **Religious Education Coordinator**

"From small beginnings come great things." --Proverb

Every January I make grand resolutions: eat healthy, exercise more, and establish a daily spiritual practice. This year, however, I am resolving to take small steps and trust that they will lead me to my ultimate goals. Recently, I've gotten a taste of how this works. I just put on my sneakers and took a walk. I didn't worry about how far or how fast, I just walked. That was a few weeks ago and today, for the first time, I walked 3.5 miles. I know that if I had began walking that much I wouldn't have enjoyed it, I would have been sore, and I probably wouldn't have done it again. Now, because of that first small step, I enjoy walking, I feel good afterwards, and I have a daily exercise habit. Moreover, I am walking with my mom and we've gotten a lot closer. What a great lesson! So this January I wish for you to be gentle with vourself and take small steps--you never know where they will lead.

Here's a small beginning that I'm sure will lead to great things:

ANNOUNCEMENT: Adult RE to begin soon--watch E-Outlook for details! Please see me if you're interested in taking a class or presenting a session.

Blessings,

Kim

Special Sunday Coffee Hour

Submitted by Bill Elwell

"Man (sic) cannot live by bread alone", so we have been told. January 15th coffee hour will celebrate homemade bread. Members and friends are invited to bring a loaf of their favorite homemade bread to share at the morning coffee hour. Butter and jams and jellies will be provided.





The Humanist Manifesto

Submitted by Michael Scott

Religious Humanism has been the prevailing theological perspective of Unitarian Universalism throughout my lifetime. Some people have suggested that its influence within our movement is fading, but much depends on definitions. Like theism, humanism means different things to different people.

Some use the term, quite broadly, for the belief that people can—and indeed must—solve their problems without supernatural aid. Others would further insist on denying that anything supernatural exists. Most see humanism as celebrating the value of reason and science. Some see it as rejecting any source of truth or meaning other than reason and science.

Clearly both the term and the candidate doctrines remain quite controversial, both within the UU movement and in society at large. For anyone who cares about the issues, I strongly recommend a careful reading of the Humanist Manifesto.

Published in 1933, the Manifesto (sometimes called Manifesto I, to distinguish it from successors in 1973 and 2003) was the defining document of religious humanism. Written mainly by Roy Wood Sellars and Raymond Bragg, it was signed by 34 prominent religious thinkers, including one Universalist minister and at least six Unitarian ministers. It's only a single page in length, and a fascinating read.

Though drawing its authority exclusively from human reason and experience, and stating quite bluntly that "the time has passed for theism," the Manifesto serves not to reject religion but rather to bring it down to earth, and to claim it as a human endeavor: "Nothing human is alien to the religious. It includes labor, art, science, philosophy, love, friendship, recreation ... "

To modern ears, the tone can seem both upbeat and strangely cold: "Man will learn to face the crises of life in terms of his knowledge of their naturalness and probability. Reasonable and manly attitudes will be fostered by education and supported by custom. We assume that humanism will take the path of social and mental hygiene and discourage sentimental and unreal hopes and wishful thinking."

The content is also intensely anthropocentric: "the way to determine the existence and value of any and all realities is by means of intelligent inquiry and by the assessment of their relations to human needs... all associations and institutions exist for the fulfillment of human life." No thought appears to be given to any notion of worth and value independent of human goals.

Yet for all these possible criticisms, the Manifesto represents a milestone in religious history, ahead not only of its own time, but in many ways of ours. It embraces the findings of science. It recognizes the human race as "part of nature," evolved through "a continuous process." It rejects any "dualism of mind and body," and any "distinction between the sacred and the secular." Written as it was near the beginning of the Great Depression, it also issues an appeal that sounds remarkably relevant today: "existing acquisitive and profit-motivated society has shown itself to be inadequate... a radical change in methods, controls, and motives must be instituted. A socialized and cooperative economic order must be established to the end that the equitable distribution of the means of life be possible. The goal of humanism is a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate for the common good. Humanists demand a shared life in a shared world."

The full text of the Manifesto can be found at www. americanhumanist.org/Who We Are/About Humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_I. Insightful commentary can be found in the doctoral work of former UUA President William F. Schultz, published in book form as Making the Manifesto: The Birth of Religious Humanism (Skinner House Books, 2002), and excerpted in the UU World of June 2003 (www.uuworld. org/2003/06/feature3.html). •





Board Happenings

Submitted by Shirley Bond

For some time, I have wanted to share what the board has been doing with readers of *Our Outlook*. This is the first of a series of articles which I hope to be a monthly feature.

At Monday's meeting Alain from the building committee shared us that the architects will be in our building soon to give us estimates concerning our capitol improvements. Figures may be available by the end of the year.

There will be a special service and reception for Reverend Sally Hamlin Sunday January 8th. The reception will be hosted by the Caring Committee. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.

There was a holiday collection taken by the congregation on Sunday December 11th. As a result we were able to express how grateful we are to our hard working employees.

Reverend Martha Munson has agreed to stay on as our contract minister until June. Many thanks!

We are moving along concerning our search for an interim minister for the fall of 2012. The committee consists of Paul Brew, Ann Rhody, Howard Spindler, Lauretta Young, and John Wellin. The First Universalist is in good hands with these willing volunteers.

On a final note the board wishes to announce that they will be meeting the second Monday in January and the first Monday the following months until at least June. Please don't forget that Board meetings are open to all.

We all wish each and every one of you a more than fantastic 2012. \bullet

Generosity of Spirit

Submitted by Ann Rhody, Treasurer

Ever wonder if we make a difference with our monthly Social Justice Plate offerings? Well, as we Rochester UU's prove time and time again, our generosity shines through. In October we donated over \$500 to Arizona Immigration Reform, and in November we made a difference for families here in Rochester by raising over \$500 to Hillside Special Santas. In December, our offering provided well-deserved bonuses for our hardworking staff members here at church, making their holiday just that much nicer. Add to that our RAIHN hosting, School 7 support and help for the Occupy Rochester folks, and you can see that we really make an impact in our community! Thanks, all, for your boundless generosity. •

Membership Orientation

Submitted by Karen Ruganis

The membership committee is hosting an orientation for both newcomers and longtime members and friends. On Jan 15, 2012, we will share the video "Voices of a Liberal Faith" which tells of our faith through story, powerful imagery, and inspirational testimonials. On Feb 5, 2012, we will share some of the history of Unitarian Universalism and our church. If you are interested in sharing some of your own faith journey, and curious to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and First Universalist, please join us. Sessions will begin at noon, after the church service, and will last approximately one hour. Please let us know if childcare is needed. ◆

Karen Ruganis & Joy Leccese, Membership Co-chairs

Successful Organomics

Submitted by Marie Sidoti

The preservation and restoration of our historic organ is a major project. Phase One of the work is scheduled for 2012. Our funding goal for this was \$8,850. We held two fund-raising lunches, catered the Saint Lawrence District Social Justice Conference and received 19 individual contributions. We now have \$11,181 in our Organ Restoration Account. That meets our goal and gives us \$2,331 toward the next phase of the work. Many, many thanks to all who contributed to this effort. Marie Sidoti, Co-Chair Music Committee. .

Drop-In Discussion, January 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.

Sunday, Jan. 1 | No drop-in discussion.

Sunday, Jan. 8 | *Open Forum Discussion* We'll meet and talk without a topic announced in advance. Phil Ebersole will facilitate.

Sunday, Jan. 15 | The Right to Believe

Do you need logical or factual proof of your religious faith before you can believe it? Is the domain of religion and faith separate from the domain of science and reason? Phil Ebersole will facilitate a discussion.

Sunday, Jan. 22 | The Most Invisible Minority

What do you think it is? Jack Belli will explain, and lead a discussion.

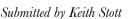
Sunday, Jan. 29 | Why We Make Mistakes

Human beings have design flaws. Our eyes trick us, our stories change in the retelling and most of us are fairly sure we're way above average. We will explore the science of human error--how we think, see, remember and forget and how this sets us up for wholly irresistable mistakes. Bill Elwell will facilitate.

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.



The Battle for Christmas



Did the yuletide completely fulfill your spirit or your senses - or not? Stephen Nissenbaum, in *The Battle for Christmas*, describes how "...Christmas rituals...have long served to transform our ordinary behavior in an almost magical fashion, in ways that reveal something of what we would like to be, what we once were, or what we are becoming despite ourselves."

For a fascinating history of our "most cherished holiday," including how Universalists and Unitarians helped revive Christmas as a public holiday after the Puritans had worked to suppress it, check out this book in our library (394.2 N). •

Book Club Forming

Submitted by Shirley Bond

Book Club forming! Please come to a discussion the second Monday in January at 11AM to talk about the direction we want to go with this idea. For example: What kind of books do we want to read and discuss? Brown bag lunch? So..... any questions please see Sarah (ssingal@rochester.rr.com) or Shirley. •

Our People

Submitted by Eileen Fernandez

Ed Lewis is rehabbing from another stroke. If you wish to contact him, his address is: Elm Manor RM 23 210 North Main St. Canandaigua, N.Y.

I spoke to Ed recently and I think he was glad to hear from me, but has a hard time with phone messages. Cards and messages are very welcome, but he will not be able to respond to them. (He has difficulty writing, but really would love to hear from his church family. Thanks all,

Eileen



Outside Ministry Report

Submitted by Eric Van Dusen

In November I volunteered to take on the Outside Ministry Coordinator position in our church. Providing support for our community outreach and social justice initiatives is something I am looking forward to. Below is a report on some of our current efforts:

RAIHN

During the week of November 27th we hosted a full house of RAIHN guests. Marti Eggers reported that RAIHN provided support to 5 adults and 10 children that week - a total of 4 families! 55 volunteers from First Universalist and St. Mary's joined together to provide a safe place for these families to come home to after a hard day of work or school. Thanks all those who helped set up and take down the rooms, those who provided meals, those who spent an evening or night, and those who will be doing laundry forever! The next training/orientation session will be held on February 1st from 6:30 to 8:30 PM at Twelve Corners Presbyterian Church. Our next Host Week begins on April 1st and Ends on April 8th, Easter Sunday.

Community Food Cupboard

Each month our we collect food donations for the Community Food Cupboard. Lauretta Young shared the following info on the Food Cupboard:

The Cupboard serves two or three bags of groceries, most of which are delivered by volunteers monthly, to about 160 senior and long-term need households in northeast Rochester and Irondequoit. In addition, they provide emergency provisions monthly to another 25 to 50 households.

School 7 Tutoring

In addition to RAIHN and the Community Food Cupboard, The First Unviersalist Church makes a difference in our community by providing volunteer tutors to School 7. Sarah Singal reported that this year we have a total of 17 volunteers, mostly from First Universalist members and friends, with a few from FREE (Friends of Educational Excellence) Partnerships, our umbrella organization. These volunteers provide 44 hours of help each week at the school, with an average of over 2 and a half hours per volunteer. Most are helping with literacy, either as tutors one-on-one or as classroom aides. Others work with children learning to speak English, tutor in math, or help reshelve books in the library. We also provide donations of some clothing and other supplies. If you would like to participate, contact Sarah at ssingal@rochester.rr.com.

GUUSTO

We have also been participating in GUUSTO's support of *Occupy Rochester*. Working with the First Unitarian, Canandaigua, Brockport and Albion UU churches, we have organized Tuesday evening dinners at our church during the month of December for *Occupy Rochester* participants. The Friends Meeting has also joined our collective effort.

It's been a active time for First Universalists working in the community. Keep up the good work. We are making a difference!

Eric Van Dusen

The Annual Service Auction Is Coming

Sunday January 29th

Your participation means everything to the success of this year's auction. Come to our table in the Clara Barton on Sunday, January 15rd to donate **or** go to our website and fill out the online donation form. www.uuroc.org. **Donation deadline wednesday, January 18th**.

Be a part of our biggest fundraising event!

Volunteers still needed for the actual day of the auction (Sunday, February 6):

- Set up/clean up
- Food donations (breads and cookies)
- Auction clerks

Contact Paula Marchese at pmarchese@rochester.rr.com, or Lauretta Young at lsy14610@gmail.com if you have any questions. +

News from GUUSTO

Genesee Unitarian Universalists Standing Together

Submitted by Connie Valk

GUUSTO, made up of all the UU churches in the area, have settled on two social justice issues - migrant farmer/ immigration situation and the Occupy Rochester effort. Two guest speakers were invited to the last meeting: Chava Redonnet (Pastor of the Oscar Romero Church, which celebrates Mass in Spanish with migrant workers in their homes) and Ami Kadar (previously the director of the no longer funded local chapter of Independent Farm Workers Center). They both told dramatic stories of the people with whom they work. We discussed two ways we might help -

1) Ami needs individuals are needed who would be willing and able to drive to Batavia to secure the release of detainees. Bond money would be provided. The goal is for the worker to have some time to make the money necessary to repay the bond before being deported. This is a complicated process but details can be given to volunteers for this job. Our speaker, Ami, has been doing this work and said it would mean a lot to the people she works with that others care enough to help this way. Most of those attending the GUUSTO meeting signed up. If you would like to join us in this effort contact amikadar@yahoo.com.

Chava said the other need is for tutoring in English – no knowledge of Spanish is necessary, though it would be helpful – and for space. We will provide more details as we explore this option.

2) The other action discussed was support for Occupy Rochester. First Universalist Church arranged to be open four Tuesday evenings in December. The other GUUSTO churches are discussing ways they can support our efforts. For example, the UUs from Albion are sending us \$200 to cover food expenses.

Check out the new St. Lawrence District Facebook page. The link is

http://www.facebook.com/pages/Saint-Lawrence-District/182844908467682. Once there have been 100 "likes" to this page, it will be easier to access.

Look for the next GUUSTO meeting on our church calendar. You are always welcome to attend.

Our Neighbors In Washington **Square Park**

Submitted by Philip Ebersole

I think we at First Universalist Church have a lot in common with our Occupy Rochester neighbors in Washington Square Park. When I go to the park to chat, the Occupy Rochester folks mention our Wayside Pulpit, and how these sayings reflect the values that they themselves old.

These are the inherent worth and dignity of people; justice, equity and compassion in human relations; the use of the democratic process; the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all. I'm glad that Shirley Bond showed up with a pot of coffee soon after the encampment began. I'm glad we hosted suppers for Occupy Rochester in December.

At first, I didn't see the point of members of a political protest movement camping out in a city park. I thought that would mean that the Occupy movement's focus would be diverted to confrontations with police and park authorities, and lose focus on their goal.

But now I see the Occupy encampment as more like a religious retreat than a political convention. The difficulties of keeping the camp going are like a kind of religious discipline, and the shared struggle is a bonding experience. And the fact of encampment provides a focal point where anybody can come and go.

Already the Occupy movement has created a model of democracy in action, with their General Assemblies, their Working Groups, their mic checks, their hand signals and their seemingly endless discussions to reach consensus.

Reasonable people can differ on the wisdom and rightness of particular actions, but I think they already have done more to help people in jeopardy of losing their homes, and to raise awareness of income inequality in this country, than anybody else has done in the past four years.

As an urban church, located in the heart of the city, I think that we at First Universalist have a unique opportunity to connect with one of the most important social movements of our time, a movement that intends to make these values real.



Auld Lang Syne

Submitted by Karen Dau, archivist

HE YEAR 1844 had been extremely disheartening for the beleaguered Universalist faithful in Rochester, after the sale of their church building that spring and the subsequent disbanding of their corporate existence as the Court Street Church Association. But in March of 1845, the ailing but indefatigable Rev. Charles Hammond preached two sermons "in Frankfort in a hall at the extreme point of the city, and very inconvenient about getting into it", as he noted, and began to revive their flagging spirits. It is instructive to note that the Frankfort he mentions was on the west high bank of the Genesee River, including the area of the present-day Smith Street Bridge and the Kodak Tower. Plans were made to locate a rental facility and begin raising funds to pay for a minister, and a decision was made to invite Rev. George Washington Montgomery to settle with them.

The two men who had founded the Universalist Sabbath School in June of 1839, John J. Van Zandt and George H. Roberts, spearheaded this renewed effort to establish Universalism on a permanent basis in the city. Mr. Roberts was a preacher's kid, the son of Rev. Henry Roberts, and an insurance agent, married but having no children, and his decades-long devotion to the city's Universalist children may have been a form of compensation. Mr. Van Zandt, better known as J. J., was a prosperous owner of a mill of high repute that processed coffee, tea and spices, married and the father of five. Both men were birthright

Full Circle Fitness at First Universalist

Aerobic movements, Yoga, Qigong, strength training, relaxation/healing techniques and more. One hour class

Saturday mornings, 9-10am, \$10 per session.

Contact Brad Hurst

342-2506 or bradleyhurst@yahoo.com

Universalists. George Roberts lived to the age of 70 and passed away in 1887, but J. J. Van Zandt encountered financial reverses and apparent chronic depression, and at age 57 tragically ended his own life in early 1870. By the autumn of 1845, Mr. Van Zandt and Mr. Roberts had learned that Rev. Montgomery was passing through Rochester on the way to Buffalo. He was planning to return there because his wife Eliza, a native of the city, was sick with consumption, or what is now called tuberculosis-the illness that would end her life just somewhat over two years later. Finding out when the train with Rev. Montgomery aboard was due to arrive in town, the two intrepid Rochesterians concocted a scheme to waylay him at the train station and persuade him to settle in Rochester. The details of Rev. Montgomery's decision-making were not passed down to our time, but he did indeed accept the proposition presented to him with one stipulation, that the society at once begin preparations to construct a church. Rev. Montgomery began his pastorate on December 7th, 1845, preaching in Minerva Hall on the corner of Main Street and South Avenue. On April 13, 1846, the congregation was incorporated as the First Universalist Society in the City of Rochester, according to the laws of New York State, and it has been continuously incorporated since that time, with an update in 1973 identifying the Society as a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Attention All Bloggers

A number of our members and friends have their own web logs. We'd like to compile a list of our bloggers and their blogs. If you have a blog and would like to be on the list, send an e-mail to uurocnews@gmail.com with your name, your blog's name and your blog's URL.

Philip Ebersole, Phil Ebersole's Blog http://philebersole.wordpress.com/ News analysis, comentary

David Damico, Guardant Press http://www.ddamico.net/wordpress/ On letterpress printing, art, humor etc.



House Report Highlight - January 2012

Submitted by Alain Perregaux

Hearing Loop

Following the Social Justice conference on September 29, we received several complaints about the poor quality of the sound coming from the hearing loop. A few simple tests conducted thereafter indicated that the background noise in the signal was so strong that it was difficult to hear the desired sound. A technician from Brighton Sound came on November 11 to analyze the problem and concluded that the signal going into the loop amplifier was too low (most probably a consequence of the installation of the new pulpit microphone whose high sensitivity forced us to lower the gain in the mixer). The signal strength in the loop was increased so as to render the background noise unnoticeable, and all the other channels were readjusted so that the sound out of the speakers would be at its normal level. The following Sunday, we received positive feedback from a few people who rely on the loop to hear the message from the pulpit.

Heat in 1st Floor Restrooms

On Sunday November 20, the toilet in the small restroom sprung a leak. When Brandon removed the toilet seat from its base on November 22, a huge cloud of steam filled the room and the hallway. It was rather obvious that something was not right. A cursory inspection of the piping in the boiler room suggested that steam from the heating system was allowed to escape into the drain pipes, together with the condensate. A minimal amount of steam pressure was allowed to build up in the drain pipes, due to the presence of water in the drain trap under the basement floor. This chain of events explains three phenomena:

- the toilet seats were warm;
- the restrooms were hot;

- the wax seal under the seat in the small restroom was melting, thus causing the leak.

Repair Of Steam/Condensate Separators

On November 22 and 23, Bill Taillie and a technician came over to address the problem of the steam backing up into the drain pipes. They discovered that two of the three "separators" (that are supposed to drain the condensate from the steam pipes while blocking the steam) were not working properly. After the separators were repaired, the drain pipes cooled down and the temperature in the restrooms became much more comfortable.

It appears that this repair solves 90% of the heat problem in the $1^{\mbox{\tiny st}}$ floor restrooms.

Downspout in SE corner of the Sanctuary

Lately, heavy rains have not caused any water leakage in the basement. We will still need to keep an eye on this downspout and, possibly, plan to conduct a camera inspection.

Capital Improvements

The recent resignation of Sally Hamlin is throwing a cloud of uncertainty over the scheduling of the capital improvements. For now, the Board and the House Committee have agreed that we should go on with the plan to renovate the sanctuary in the Summer of 2012. We will keep our options open about the timing of the structural improvements. As of this writing, we are expecting contractors and architects to inspect the building on Tuesday December 13 for the purpose of generating cost estimates that will allow us to do more precise planning.









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First Universalist Church

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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

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

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