



# Our Outlook

## First Universalist Church of Rochester

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## Sunday Services | July & August 2024

### July 7 | *We Should Always Be Able To Say "I'm Sorry"*

We are all taught as children to say “I’m sorry” when we have hurt someone else. As adults, however, some of us have a harder time than others putting this lesson into practice. It’s never a mistake to say “I’m sorry” even if we believe we are in the right.

— Peter House

### July 14 | *Letting Go of Ourselves*

Life is full of goodbyes. The longer we live, the more loved ones we have to say goodbye to. While it’s painful, we do survive, and life goes on. Are there lessons to be learned from these experiences about how to say the biggest goodbye of all?

— Peter House

### July 21 | *What I Learned From the Eclipse*

April 8 was supposed to be the opportunity of a lifetime. But we all know that Rochester’s weather didn’t cooperate with our big plans. Are there lessons to be learned from that day that may be more valuable than the memories we’d have of everything having worked out perfectly?

— Peter House

### July 28 | *What I Believe*

A worship service sharing theologies of Unitarian Universalism in multiple voices. Taking our pluralism seriously by sharing this diversity of beliefs.

— Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell

### August 4 | *How Easy It Can Be to Fracture a Community*

The past eight years have shown us that our national unity is much more fragile than we ever thought. We are living in an ever more narcissistic era where the beliefs and the desires of the individual are increasingly valued over the compromise and acceptance required by our communities and institutions. We must all live with increased awareness of how easy it can be to fracture a community.

— Peter House

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Worship will be online and in-person at First Universalist Church. Check our website for more updated info! Please join us – Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/131764422>; Phone number: 1-646-558-8656 with Meeting ID: 131 764 422. ❖

## August 11 | *Christianity Without Beliefs*

The United States is not a Christian Nation as so many of our friends on the right claim it is. But Christianity is nonetheless the religion which dominates our culture. Is it possible to be a devout Christian without believing in anything supernatural? Could Christianity be boiled down to a set of practices which make the world a better place?

— Peter House

## August 18 | *Injustice or Destiny?*

Most Americans live fairly privileged lives when measured in global terms. This privilege at times blinds us to universal truths, and over-inflates our expectations. Is there still a place for humility and acceptance in 21st century America?

— Peter House

## August 25 | *A Celebration of Justice!!*

Justice is a central value for Unitarian Universalists. This service will feature the Transposing Voices Choir, an all-trans choir based in Rochester.

— Rev. Lane-Maired Campbell

❖ Services begin at 10am ❖



## Draw the Circle Wide

*A Message from*

*Rev. Lane-Maired Campbell*

In service to our shared seasonal theme of “Widening” for July and August, I am thinking about the wide net that Unitarian Universalism casts theologically and communally. As our association of congregations has been wrestling with a shift in our shared values and understandings with amending Article 2 of our bylaws, one of the shared values is Pluralism. A value that honors multiple religious traditions, in the ways they live in the bodies, stories, histories, and present days of Unitarian Universalism.

This tradition has long-claimed Christian roots and has always been for free-thinkers. We have been a place families with multiple religious views and traditions can find a home. We have also been a place where people who identify as Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Pagan, Atheist, Humanism, and so many traditions—too many to name—can come together to explore universalism—a shared love amongst all of humanity. Honoring Pluralism calls upon our church to honor many religious traditions and to be intentionally wide about what theologies we see at our roots. As we have many people coming from many religious perspectives, what truly are the roots of Unitarian Universalism?

And I am thinking about how this church widens who “we” are. I am thinking about what it means to be a congregation in Rochester’s downtown. I am thinking about what it means to grow and what that means for how First Universalist defines itself. Are the houseless neighbors who stay out on the porch a part of this congregation? Are the kids in Rochester City Schools our kids? Are the new people who come through our doors a part of “us”? I sure hope so. And I wonder how to better live that out.

How has this tradition called upon you to widen your beliefs and your understanding of the people you claim and are accountable to? What gifts do you bring to this congregation’s endeavors to grow who “we” are? Whatever gifts you have to offer, I know First Universalist will benefit from them.

In Faith and Courage,

Rev. Lane-Maired ❖

## Voter Registration

*Submitted by Kathy Russell & Katherine Flynn*

The UU Community at Chautauqua plans to send 20,000 postcards with voting info to voters of color. Kathy Russell and Katherine Flynn will be there for a week and can bring packets back to our community to write.

If you want to address and write the script for 20 postcards, let Kathy or Katherine know. We will distribute them at the end of July. ❖



## Finance News

Submitted by Ann Rhody, Finance Chair

As I prepared to write this article, I went back to check what was in the Summer *Outlook* last year. The Finance article was all about our search for a Finance Administrator.

Here we are, a year later, and that position has become a reality. Maresa Carmody joined our staff in February, and since then has been managing more and more of the routine Finance functions of the church.

Things DO change. As I look back on 20-something years of my involvement in the Finances of First Universalist, and get ready to step down from Finance leadership, that's the big takeaway. Things DO change.

There have been many ups and downs during these 20 years. Times of penny-pinching, and times of plenty. Times of worrying about the future, and times of feeling more secure.

We've modernized—gone paperless. We have more volunteers now. Our endowment has grown as folks have left bequests to the church, and our wise investing has paid off. Our building is in better shape.

And throughout it all, one thing has NOT changed: the generosity and commitment of members of this congregation. Whether stepping up to make a special donation to support a project, making generous pledges, or committing time and effort to stewardship drives and service auctions, people love this church, and consistently demonstrate that.

What a wonderful thing to see! As the years go on, MORE changes will come as we redistribute some finance roles, and learn how to better attract people to our beautiful church. I'm confident that this congregation will remain generous and committed, and that will carry us through whatever is next. Brian Mumey is well positioned to take on the role of Finance Chair. Thanks for your confidence and trust in me for all of these years! ❖

## 2024 Pride!

Submitted by Connie Valk

The struggle is not over. At last count the ACLU is tracking 516 anti-LGBTQ bills in the USA.

Our church will join with other local UUs to march or watch the annual Rochester Pride Parade on July 20 at 11am. Line-up begins at 10am. Sign up at [pride@uuroc.org](mailto:pride@uuroc.org) or in the Clara Barton Lounge during coffee in early July to participate. Details regarding time, line-up, parking, lawn chair watching crew, etc. will be emailed to all those who sign up.



Note: The parade route is different this year. The parade begins at the intersection of South Ave and Science Pkwy and ends at Highland Park. ❖

## Bi-Monthly Leadership Assembly: July 11

Submitted by Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell

If you are a leader or would like to become one please join us for our bi-monthly Leadership Assembly on Thursday, July 11, at 7pm. This month we will be talking about how to collaborate and communicate effectively to grow membership. Our leaders are encouraged to communicate about initiatives, goals, and priorities. These important conversations and collaborative spaces will happen every other month from 7-8:30pm in the Chalice Room and online. Zoom Link: [tinyurl.com/4vbxhj7p](https://tinyurl.com/4vbxhj7p). ❖

# Drop-In Discussion

Submitted by John Lukes

Drop-in discussions are held Tuesday evenings from 6:30-7:30pm via the church Zoom account, and in-person on the first Sunday of each month in the Chalice Room at 9:15am. Phil Ebersole is the contact for in-person discussions. Contact [DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org](mailto:DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org) for the link, or look on [uuroc.org](http://uuroc.org)!

## July 2 | *UU the Vote*

Barbara Brody will present and lead a discussion on the 'UU the Vote' program as it impacts the upcoming National Election.

## July 9 | *My Bahá'í Journey*

Munir Bahá'í will present and lead a discussion on three aspects of his lifetime as a Bahá'í, how these reflect the central teachings of all world religions, and why he is comfortable joining with us for drop-in discussions.

## July 16 | *What Is Genocide?*

Phil Ebersole will make a presentation and lead a discussion on the question—a topic very relevant to the ongoing wars in various regions of our world.

## July 23 | *New York Farmworkers are Making Progress*

Farmworkers won the right to overtime pay after 60 hours in 2023, now 56 hours in 2024, but it is clear that it is only the beginning. What legal protections are farmworkers still missing, recent legislative wins, hurdles, and other legislation in the works. Cassandra Bocanegra, Manager of Organizing and Strategy for the Finger Lakes Region, NYS Immigration Coalition, will be presenting.

## July 30 | *Ending Loneliness*

Our guest presenter, Giovanna Gutierrez from Compeer Rochester, will present the organization's mission, current programs, and lead a discussion on how many participants are on their waiting list, their current need for volunteers, and the options available for people to get involved.

Have a topic for us? Contact our team with your proposal at [DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org](mailto:DropInDiscussion@uuroc.org). ❖



# Acceptance & Engagement

A Message from  
Peter House

The outcome of the 2016 election was an unwelcome surprise for many of us. I had one friend who could not bring herself to accept the outcome.

As a result of this lack of acceptance, she felt it necessary to tune out the news. Prior to this, she had always been an activist—marching in protests, circulating petitions, encouraging her friends to be more involved, and lobbying politicians. It was strange to see this once-dedicated activist retreat into the privacy of her own life—binging Netflix dramas instead of reading the *New York Times*, changing topic from current events to recipes, and being caught off guard when the Dobbs decision was handed down. Whenever pressed her answer was the same “I won't accept what's happening”.

If only the world worked that way! If only we could shape reality simply by what we accepted, and what we didn't. Yet, we hear this sentiment expressed a lot in the fight for justice, peace, and equity—that we must not accept things as they are.

I have come to see however that if we are to really engage with the world, and be agents for change, we must fully, deeply, and actively accept everything exactly as it is. If we can't accept, we can't engage. We won't see things as they are if we can't bear to look. We will be like my friend—cocooning ourselves off from the things which challenge, anger, and scare us, and leaving the work to others—hoping that somehow the state of the world will be transformed while we're rewatching *Downton Abbey* and surfing the web for gluten-free brownie recipes.

There is certainly a place for refuge and retreat—we all need that. Let us continue to do things that feed our souls and give us peace. But we must also resist the urge to hunker down there all the time, no matter how much we may want to.

There is injustice and suffering all around us. The world needs our engagement and compassion. We should rest when we need to, but when refreshed, let's covenant with each other to engage as fully as we can with things exactly as they are. It is only through our ability to engage that we can accept, and only through our acceptance that we can act. Let this be the summer of acceptance! ❖





## Widening Our Experience of Children's Literature

*A Message from  
Rev. Michelle Yates*

Even before the pandemic, Rev. Lane-Mairead and I set a goal to share stories with "grit." Stories from a diversity of authors and artists that tackle difficult topics that children face just as adults do. There is a meme I've seen on social media that says, "Sometimes a topic is so complex it can only be addressed with a picture book."

In the past 5-10 years, the amount of children's literature and picture books has exploded with diversity of authors and illustrators, tackling topics that maybe only had one book on that topic once upon a time, if that. So many more than I am able to share in the Sundays we have. I have received many requests to share a list of the stories that I have shared over the past church year, and you can find the list below.

Please consider further expanding your experience with picture books by poking your head in the children's area next time you are in a library. Check out the displays and books that the librarians have selected. From experience, the staff are always happy to help and enjoy the challenge of helping you find books on a particular topic.

I am always happy to recommend a book/story, and to hear recommendations! Thank you for being open to hearing truth and seeing beauty through this medium of sacred text!

Yours in your Journey,

Rev. Michelle ❖

### Books Shared 2023-24

"We Are Brothers" by Yves Nadon,  
Illustrated by Jean Claverie

"What the Road Said" by Cleo Wade,  
Illustrated by Lucie de Moyencourt

"We Are Allies!" by Taimani Emerald

"I Remember Miss Perry" by Pat Brisson,  
Illustrated by Stephane Jorisch

"The Best Place in the World" by Petr Horacek

"Keepunumuk: Weeachumun's Thanksgiving Story"  
by Danielle Greendeer, Anthony Perry & Alexis Bunten,  
Illustrated by Garry Meeches Sr.

"Go the F\*\*\* to Sleep"/"Seriously, Just Go to Sleep"  
by Adam Mansbach, Illustrated by Ricardo Cortes

"Christmas in the Trenches" by John McCutcheon,  
Illustrated by Henri Sorensen

"Hello, Dark" by Wai Mei Wong,  
Illustrated by Tamara Campeau

"God's Holy Darkness" by Sharei Green & Beckah Selnick,  
Illustrated by Nikki Faison

"We Move Together"  
by Kelly Fritsch, Anne McGuire, and Eduardo Trejos

"The Storyteller's Candle" by Lucia Gonzalez,  
Illustrations by Lulu Delacre

"The Flame of Love" from "Prayer for Love"  
in "The Four Agreements" by Don Miguel Ruiz

"Red: A Crayon's Story" by Michael Hall

"The Story of Ferdinand" by Munro Leaf,  
Illustrated by Robert Lawson

"Babu's Song" by Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen,  
Illustrated by Aaron Boyd

"Just Right Family: An Adoption Story" by Silvia Lopez,  
Pictures by Ziyue Chen

"Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes"  
by James Dean & Eric Litwin

"Still a Family" by Brenda Reeves Sturgis,  
Pictures by Jo-Shin Lee

"Beneath" by Cori Doerrfeld

"Bunnybear" by Andrea J. Loney,  
Pictures by Carmen Saldaña

"Frederick" by Leo Lionni

"The More You Give" by Marcy Campbell,  
Illustrated by Francesca Sanna

"Be a Good Ancestor" by Leona & Gabrielle Prince,  
Illustrated by Carla Joseph

"A Place for Elijah" by Kelly Easton Ruben,  
Illustrated by Joanne Friar

"A Bad Case of Stripes" by David Shannon

"The Hummingbird" by Wangari Maathai

"This Joy!" by Shelley Johannes

"You're So Amazing" by James and Lucy Catchpole,  
Illustrated by Karen George

"Twas the Night Before Pride" by Joanna McClintick,  
Illustrated by Juana Medina

"Good News; Bad News" by Jeff Mack ❖

# EcoJustice: Another Try at Plastic Free July

Submitted by Sarah Singal

Plastic Free July has been around since 2011, when it first began in Australia. It has gained momentum and is now a global effort. We are becoming more and more aware of the pervasive presence of microplastics in the earth, water, in our bodies, and despite early efforts to curb this trend, there has been no downward turn in measurable plastics, only persistent upward climb.

- **Part 1 of Plastic Free July is to get educated!**

Review a comprehensive article on plastic waste in this country produced by [BeyondPlastics.org](http://BeyondPlastics.org), written in 2021 here: [tinyurl.com/3t46yy7u](http://tinyurl.com/3t46yy7u).

- **Part 2 is to read up** on Plastic Free July here:

[tinyurl.com/33x95ytp](http://tinyurl.com/33x95ytp). You will find an emphasis on what the individual can do. This can be important for it can make people more aware of the difficulty of going plastic-free, it can encourage people to voice their concerns, and it can help persuade communities and corporations to listen to what the public is demanding. But it will never be quick and effective enough to achieve the desired drawdown of plastic pollution. What could bring a more rapid correction is legislation, placing the burden of responsible use and disposal of packaging on the corporations that produce the plastic.

- **Part 3 is advocacy for legislation.** NYS has

legislation that has come close to passing into law: *The Packaging Reduction & Recycling Infrastructure Act* which was passed in the Senate but was not brought to a vote in the Assembly. Read more here: [tinyurl.com/2y5ya6tx](http://tinyurl.com/2y5ya6tx).

The *Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act* has not been passed by the Senate or the House. Read about it ([tinyurl.com/26aydkw5](http://tinyurl.com/26aydkw5)) and stay tuned for updates. Lawmakers usually want to be reelected and listen to their constituents! You can tell your legislators what you think about plastic anytime!

Keep using your reusable bags, wax paper, ceramic mugs, non-plastic water bottles, takeout containers, and ask your supermarkets if they know about Plastic Free July. Tell them what you think about their use of plastic, give them a grade, and ask them to do better. ❖

# Social Justice Plate: July & August

Submitted by Joy Leccese

Our Summer Social Justice Plate Offerings are designated for *490 Farmers* in July and *Children Awaiting Parents* in August.



*490 Farmers* seeks to learn alongside Rochester residents and youth to build community, provide land access, and address food insecurity through urban agriculture. Guided by principles of mutual aid, they aim to steward a space where all feel welcome and integral to this mission, thereby pushing our city toward a more resilient and equitable future. For more info, visit [490farmers.com](http://490farmers.com).



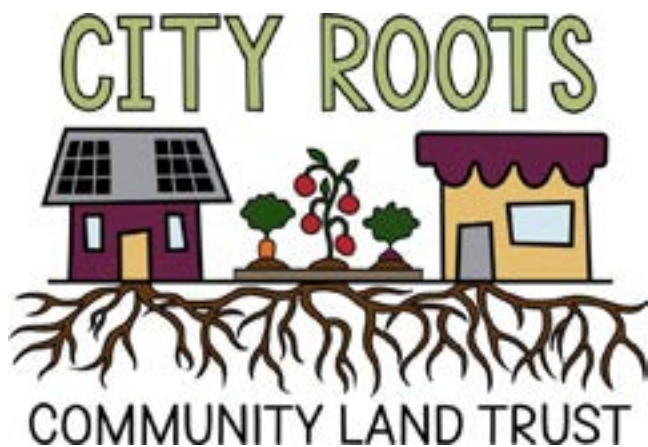
*Children Awaiting Parents, Inc.* is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to finding adoptive families for those children in foster care who wait the longest. They work on behalf of these children, typically teenagers, sibling groups who wish to stay together and/or those children with special needs. They are dedicated to finding loving adoptive families for children in foster care. They also advocate nationally for adoption by bringing attention to the children, promoting interest among people who could become permanent adoptive families and encouraging adoption friendly policies. For more info, visit [childrenawaitingparents.org](http://childrenawaitingparents.org). ❖

# Housing For All News

Submitted by Chris DeGolyer & Connie Valk

## Family Promise's New Transitional Housing Program

Family Promise (FPGROC) soon will be able to shelter more families! Family Promise is partnering with *City Roots CLT* (Community Land Trust) and has acquired two buildings currently owned by City Roots. FPGROC is calling for volunteers to help renovate eight apartments in these buildings. FPGROC will rent these at below-market rates as transitional housing to families, so that families can save money and prepare for permanent housing with FPGROC's help. According to Family Promise, "the primary reason families experience homelessness in Greater Rochester is due to a lack of decent, equitable, and affordable housing; the Transitional Housing Program is a natural next step for FPGROC in addressing family homelessness in the Rochester community." A group of us plan to volunteer for a few hours to prepare the apartments, starting at 1pm on Saturday, July 13, and on Saturday, August 10. If you're interested in joining us, please contact [housingforall@uuroc.org](mailto:housingforall@uuroc.org).



## Homelessness on Our Doorstep

The House and Garden Committees have been working to solve the issue of people sleeping in the church alcove. Besides a "No Trespassing" sign, a sign in the alcove lists a phone number that people can call to get a place to stay. A House Committee member

checks the alcove daily, and when people are seen sleeping there, he emails concerned church members and Andy Carey of REACH. Andy and REACH staff members reach out to the sleepers to offer legitimate shelter. On June 13, Andy gave a training session to several church members on how best to interact with folks taking shelter in the alcove. We hope these gentle diversion methods will persuade the sleepers to move to better, legitimate shelter and to use other services that agencies offer.

## The Toilet Papers

On Thursday, June 13, Elizabeth Osta and other church members attended a City Council meeting to speak about the need for a downtown public restroom that would be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We presented toilet paper to illustrate the need.



*First Universalists, including our former alcove resident Debbie, gathered at City Hall with our City Council representative Mary Lupien to advocate for Public Restrooms in the City of Rochester. Note that all are holding rolls of toilet paper to help make the issue more urgent in the eyes of City Hall. ❖*

## 2024 G.A. Watch Party!

Submitted by Rev. Lane-Mairead Campbell



*A joy to share in the UUA's virtual General Assembly with our sibling congregation, First Unitarian! Feel the UU Love! ❖*





# 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 begins at 10am on Sundays**

**Summer Minister** | Peter House

**Minister of Lifespan Faith Development** |  
Rev. Michelle Yates

**Music Director** | Dr. Brock Tjosvold

**Office Manager** | Mx. Emma Barry

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