

Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester

September 2013

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Our Outlook

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Sunday Services | September 2013

Sept. 1 | *Memory is Overrated*

– Summer Minister, Peter House

Sept. 8 | *Y'all Come!*

A gala ingathering which will formally celebrate the sanctuary renovations. We'll honor Beryl Hass' legacy, joyfully be together again, and somewhat more "quietly" than usual mingle our waters of summer. Celebratory coffee hour will follow, which will honor those involved with the renovations. Press releases will be "out there" so we hope for many visitors. Let's show them a healthy, vibrant community downtown. Building tour at 12:15. Y'all come! This is a service for all ages.

– Rev. Martha Munson and many friends

Sept. 15th | *Always Needing to Say "I'm Sorry"*

The High Holy Days are just concluded. Or are they? My experience suggests that one ritual atonement is a good thing, a very good thing, but that my need to apologize goes on and on.

– Rev. Martha Munson

Sept. 22 | *A Hope-Filled Faith*

I was asked recently to conduct a cemetery committal service for a wise and much beloved woman. The one thing her family wanted was that there be no reference to the need for those gathered to be "saved". I assured them that this would be no problem; I am, after all, a Universalist. And so are we all (at our best).

– Rev. Martha Munson

Sept. 29 | *Why Should We be Good?*

If the "bottom line" for Unitarian Universalists is that we should lead good lives, we may still need to ask "why?" Why should we be good; wouldn't it be more fun to be bad?

– The Rev. Peter Lee Scott

The Rev. Dr. Peter Lee Scott is a retired Universalist Unitarian minister, living in Utica. He is Minister Emeritus of our UU churches in Little Falls & Salisbury Center.

Our regular morning service as well as Religious Education classes begin at 10:30am.





Walking With You

Message from the Interim Minister

One of my favorite readings for the start of a new church year are these Opening Words by my colleague, Barbara Pescan:

One Of The Old Ones Stood Up Into The Morning Light

One of the old ones stood up into the morning light and spoke to those who had come back to the river:

“Now we have come again to this place; it is a good thing. My life apart from you is not as strong.

Yes, I have danced and I have told the stories at my own fire and I have sung to all the six directions.

But when I am with you, my friends, I know better who it is in me that sings.”

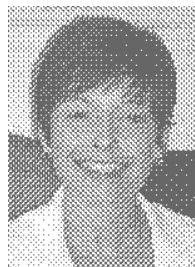
Summer wanes, great things await *First Universalist*. With your presence, participation, persistence, and perspicacity, your congregation will do amazing things this year.

I look forward to seeing you on the corner of South Clinton and Court. ❖

Faithfully, *Martha*

Thanks for a summer of beautiful music!

Our summer services were made even more special by volunteer musicians! Thanks to John Akers, Monica Beck, Charles Courtsal, Glenda Brayman, Nancy Grear, Alain Perregaux, Gordon Porth, Ann Rhody, Sarah Singal, Howard Spindler, and Patricia Stott for sharing your talent with us this summer. ❖



Gleanings

from Religious Growth & Learning

Rev. Lori Staubitz, Director of Faith Development

I remember attending worship with colleagues at Virginia Union University (my Alma Mater in Richmond)...as the Dean, a well established preacher in his own right, called out, challenging us all to respond... “Some one give me a good word” his voice rang out across the crowded pews. He repeated the same words again, this time much slower and commanding. “I said, someone give me a good word”.....A resounding Amen Sister or Amen Brother echoed back in answer.

“We all knew we were in need of a good word and that preacher was prepared to give us one.”

But a good word is hard to come by.....

The rhetoric of hate abounds in our culture. It is language that serves to separate us from one another; Republicans from the Democrats, Religious Liberals from the Religious Right. The languages of divisions all start to sound alike as angry and arrogant voices from all “sides” declare..... “WE ARE NOT LIKE THEM”.

“Psychologist Carl Jung once said that a great deal of institutional religion is designed to prevent the faithful from having a spiritual experience. Instead of teaching people how to live in peace, religious leaders often concentrate on marginal issues: Is evolution compatible with the first chapter of Genesis? Should there be prayer in public schools? Can women become priests? Instead of bringing people together, preoccupation with these issues encourages policies of exclusion, drawing attention to the differences between ‘us’ and ‘them’.” —article from *AARP Magazine* from Religious Scholar Karen Armstrong, author of *The Spiral Staircase: Climb Out of the Darkness*.

This year in our Religious Adult Faith Journey offerings, we are offering “A GOOD WORD”. Come explore some of the essentials of Unitarian Universalism in community or prepare to “dive deeply” as we explore Theologian Henry Nelson Weiman’s writings from “The Source of Human Good”. In the spirit of “Appreciative Inquiry” please plan to join in the process of naming what is good, essential and whole as we move forward together into this new church year! ❖



Fall in the Saint Lawrence District

Submitted by Michael Scott

As we begin a new church year, there are many events to look forward to around the Saint Lawrence District. Mark your calendars!

- For those who appreciate a weekend in the woods, there are at least three fall opportunities at *Unirondack*, the UU camp and conference center near Lowville, NY. Two of these (Sept. 20–22 and Oct. 18–20) are “work weekends,” where attendees contribute their Saturday morning to clean-up and fix-up activities around the camp, and spend the rest of the weekend on hiking, canoeing, kayaking, campfires, games, or just sitting in the shade and unwinding. I’m hoping to make it to the Sept. weekend myself, and would welcome the chance to carpool. The third opportunity, for those who have already made a commitment to the camp, is *Members’ Weekend*, Oct 11–14. For more information, visit unirondack.org.
- For those interested in exploring and strengthening their leadership skills, the Central East Regional Group (the multi-district region of which Saint Lawrence is a part) will be holding a one-day workshop at *May Memorial UU Society of Syracuse* on September 29. With a theme of “We’re Better Together: Exploring the Promise of Our Potential,” the workshop will be anchored by keynote speaker Kathy McGowen, Congregational Life Consultant for the UUA’s Southern Region. There will also be a variety of exciting workshops. For more information, visit cerguua.org/cergevents/490-sldleader.html.
- A more structured and somewhat less rustic alternative to the 2nd Unirondack work weekend is the annual UU Weekend at Silver Bay. Organized by the UU congregations of the Capital region, the gathering is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, Oct. 18–20. I’ve never had a chance to go, but have heard wonderful things about it. The facility is a beautiful, 600-acre YMCA camp, in the classic Adirondack resort style, near the north end of Lake George. For more information, visit albanyuu.org/wp/?page_id=502.

- The *Women’s Spirituality Conference*, originally planned for last May, has been rescheduled to Oct. 11–12 at the First UU Society of Syracuse. Information will be posted soon at www.uuwr.org/SLDUUWR.
- Finally, the *New York State Convention of Universalists* will be holding its annual meeting in Little Falls, NY, on Oct. 25–26. Many of you will remember (though perhaps not through personal experience :-)) that NYSCU was the principal denominational body for Universalist churches in New York State prior to 1961. Today it serves mainly as a small grant-making foundation, dedicated to UU growth and to preservation and advancement of our Universalist heritage. Many members of our congregation are current or past leaders of the organization (among them Joyce Gilbert, who currently serves as President). The annual meeting boasts a lively day and a half of worship, workshops, business, and social events. Keynote speaker will be Christine Hart, Policy Associate for *Policy & Government Affairs of Women Thrive Worldwide*. For more information, visit nyscu.org. ❖



Leadership Assembly

Sat. Oct. 5th from 9:30 – noon.

All leaders (Board, Transition Team, Ministerial Search Committee members, Committee Chairs or their designees) are invited and encouraged to attend this morning of calendar planning, leadership development, and sharing of plans for the church year ahead. It is especially important this year, as the Ministerial Search Committee needs your undivided attention. ❖

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Bring a Friend Sunday

October 6

Last year we had a great turnout: let’s do so again. Please think now about which of your friends, “churched” or not, you’d like to invite, and do so.

Service Topic: “*God*” is not *God’s Name*. ❖

Ministerial Search Committee: Survey and Cottage Meetings are Coming!



You have charged the Ministerial Search Committee (MSC) with calling a minister. We know that we cannot do this alone. We need you, as a member or friend of the congregation, to help us.

In September, we will ask you to complete a survey. You may ask “*Why another survey?*” We have two reasons: 1) so that you can express your needs and wishes for the congregation’s future ministry, and 2) so we can give a true picture of the congregation to prospective ministers. The survey results will either support or correct our subjective impressions of the congregation’s make-up and direction. You can complete the survey online, or on paper.

In September and October, we will also ask you to attend a cottage meeting, aka a focus group. We’re holding cottage meetings in addition to surveys, because people discussing together can build on each other’s thoughts to generate better ideas and to come to agreement about who we are and what we expect in a minister. We hope that everyone will participate.

This work on your part is listed in the MSC’s Covenant, which is posted on First Universalist’s website soon. You can also check the bulletin board in the Clara Barton Lounge for the complete document, including take home copies. Or, ask our office manager, Kris, at firstuu@frontiernet.net, to send you an email copy or a paper copy.

Here’s the part of the Covenant that most pertains to you, the Congregation.

Ministerial Search Committee Relationship with the Congregation:

We commit to

1. Keeping you up to date on the progress of the search process on a regular basis and being available to answer questions by e-mail, phone and in person when desired;
2. Listening to & reflecting carefully on the input you give us;
3. Doing our work with care, integrity and confidentiality consistent with our UU values;
4. Seeking help when we need it from UUA resources, Rev. Martha Munson and members of the congregation.

We ask from you

1. Your input as we gather information to prepare the documents we will use in the search, including participation in the survey and cottage meetings;
2. Your feedback on our communication with the congregation and the documents we prepare for potential candidates to describe who we are, our values, and our dreams;
3. Your availability to meet the candidate during candidating week;
4. Your presence in April to vote on the call;
5. Your understanding that we can only update you on where we are in the process and not on any matters directly relating to candidates, both during the search process and at any time in the future;
6. Your trust that we will use good judgment and work for the best interest of First Universalist. ❖

Calling All Musical People

Submitted by Bryan Holten

Do you sing or play an instrument? The music ministry of First Universalist seeks to include a wide variety of styles and flavors, and to achieve that goal we need YOU! The choir resumes its regular schedule of weekly Sunday rehearsals on September 8 at 9:00 a.m., in room 25. Contact Director of Music **Bryan Holten** by e-mail <music@uuroc.org>, or by phone, 585-633-8705. All are welcome. *Service is our prayer!* ❖

Fall Finance and FUN update!

- As the door has closed on the 2012-13 fiscal year (it ended June 30) things are looking good- we ended the year in the black! A full and detailed report will be available in October.
- Save the dates for our fundraisers:
 - ✓ Change drive October 27 and November 3
 - ✓ Holiday Shoppe- Sundays November 24- December 22
 - ✓ Service Auction Sunday, February 2, 2014
- Want to get involved and help the Finance Committee, but too many numbers make your head spin? Please consider helping out with one of our projects! We need folks to count change on November 3, make and donate items for the Holiday Shoppe, assist with lunch during the Auction on February 2, and help design materials /bulletin boards for stewardship and other finance activities. See Ann Rhody if you have a BIG heart but are looking for a SMALL job!

A continued thanks to all of you who support our beloved community through your pledges, contributions, and hard work!

Ann Rhody for the Finance Committee:

Lauretta Young, Bill Jones, Alain Perregaux,
Dave VanArsdale, Cathie Grisley, Paula Marchese. ❖



Raihn Car City

Would you give up your bed for one night if it could change a homeless child's life?

What: *CAR CITY* - an event to raise awareness of family homelessness and a fundraiser to benefit the Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network.

When: Saturday, September 21 through Sunday, September 22 – 5:00PM to 7:30AM

Where: Asbury First United Church parking lot, 1050 East Avenue

Who: families, individuals, service groups and youth org.

Why: On any given night in Greater Rochester, as many as 100 families with children are homeless. RAIHN - network of 43 faith communities working together to end homelessness for children and their families - provides shelter, meals, counseling, support and assistance in securing safe, affordable housing.

How: Individuals are issued a pledge form to raise a minimum of \$50 to sleep overnight in their cars in the Asbury Church parking lot. Those who choose not to sleep in their cars may use the pledge money for a “parking pass.” Group leaders will additionally submit a team registration form. Pledge forms and team registration forms are available on the RAIHN bulletin board in the Clara Barton Lounge or at www.raihn.org.

CAR CITY participants will receive a T-shirt, supper, entertainment, a light breakfast, prizes for the best decorated car, and an iPad awarded to the top fundraiser.

For more information, contact raihnarcity@gmail.com, or visit www.raihn.org. ❖

Become a RAIHN Volunteer

Submitted by Christine DeGolyer

Volunteering for RAIHN has brought me unexpected pleasures, such as watching a six year old cook pancakes for a Sunday breakfast for RAIHN guests and playing Bingo with bright, energetic, beautiful children. Another big pleasure is getting to know other RAIHN volunteers as we work together to provide shelter for families temporarily without a home. If you'd like to volunteer, consider attending a training session on Thursday, Oct. 3rd from 7-9 PM at Summerville Presbyterian Church,



4845 St. Paul Blvd. You will learn what RAIHN is all about, why it is an important service for many families in our community, and what you need to know as a volunteer.

Questions? Ask Sarah Singal (261-3800), Marti Eggers (385-4342), or Christine DeGolyer (461-3616) or check www.raihn.org

*Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network: “Helping homeless families achieve sustainable independence” ❖

Let It Begin With Me or True Confessions of a Real Church Lady

Here I am, on the Transition Team. Chair of the Finance committee. Long term, faithful church member. Generous pledger. Auctioneer extraordinaire (or so I've been told). Volunteer musician for summer services. Years and years of trying to do the right thing by our church community, through thick and thin. I mean, how virtuous can a person get??

So imagine my surprise and distress when I realize that, as we continue to get better at welcoming and integrating newer folks, I am doing things that are a BIG part of what could be holding us back. ME!!!! MS. VIRTUOUS CHURCH MEMBER!!!

What, you may ask? Well, here are some do's and don'ts that help us communicate with newer people that they might find a church home with us, and where I am missing the mark:

1. Don't do church business at coffee hour. OK, huge offender here. There's always that person I have to check something out with.... ask a question... follow up on that e-mail. And it FEELS so efficient and effective when I do it. But it can keep me from engaging visitors, and can make someone quickly feel like an outsider.
2. After the service, don't make a beeline to catch up with your friends until you have talked for a while with someone newer. But... but... it can be one of the only

times I see my friends from church!! Yes.... and if those friends become my primary focus every Sunday, how does that leave room for new friendships to form?

3. Don't hold church meetings right after the service. But... but... it's so convenient- we're all here anyway!! Yes.... just wait till at least 12:15 to be sure we've had time to talk to folks during coffee hour.
4. Engage newer people in dialogue about what they are looking for and how we can help. OK, we hate to proselytize. Can't we just talk about the weather? Small talk? Small talk only goes so far- that's not why they come to visit! I need to talk about what I love about church, and get to know how we can better serve the needs of our community by listening to the voices of our visitors.

I consistently see all of us warmly greeting visitors during the service.... that's not a problem. But after a few visits, people need to feel that it's easy to find "access points" into a sense of belonging here. Even those of us who are "virtuous church members" may be unknowingly keeping them from getting that feeling
5. So I'm going to make a real effort to change the things I'm doing. I hereby ask you to call me on it if you see me slip back into my habits. And I hereby ask all of you other church people, virtuous or not, to join me in making these changes!!

Ann Rhody for the Transition Team

Karl Abbott, chair, Bill Elwell, Mary Louise Gerek ❖

School 7

Submitted by Sarah Singal

Tim Mullins is our new liaison between First Universalist and School 7. His interests in social justice, education, and computers make him especially qualified for this action. If you would like to volunteer to be a tutor, classroom aide, or library helper at this elementary school in Northwest Rochester, please contact Tim. Orientation and training are provided.

This year we will again provide backpacks, at least 25, for children who come to school without backpacks, starting in early September. We will purchase most of them, but

lightly used backpacks are also welcome, any time of the year. Bring receipts in with a form for the bookkeeper and you will be reimbursed. And this year we will work with the school social worker to provide Thanksgiving food packages for families and Christmas presents for children. These projects are short term and very much appreciated. If you would like to help with any of these please see Tim or Sarah Singal. ❖

Drop-In Discussion, September Schedule

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

Drop-in discussions are held each Sunday in the adult lounge on the second floor of our church at 9:15 a.m. except during the summer. 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. Here is the schedule.

We'll meet at 11:15 a.m. on September 1.

September 1 | *A Quick Look at Labor Unions: Past, Present and Future.* Janet Rothbeind will facilitate.

We'll resume our 9:15 a.m. schedule on Sept 8.

September 8 | *Open forum Discussion*

September 15 | *Upheaval in the Middle East*

We'll try to figure out what is happening in Egypt, Syria and other Middle East countries and what U.S. policy should be. Phil Ebersole will facilitate.

September 22 | *Social Norms and Self Control*

We human beings often are happy to do certain things for free, but not when we are paid to do them. We often are unable make ourselves to do things that we actually want to do. Bill Elwell will help us understand these predictably irrational aspects of human behavior.

September 29 | *Not Hell, But Hope*

John Murray is generally considered to be the founder of the Universalist denomination in the United States. We'll talk about who he was and why his doctrine of universal salvation was embraced so fervently by some and hated by others. Phil Ebersole will facilitate.

If you have a topic you would like discussed or, better still, would like to lead a discussion, speak to David Damico or Phil Ebersole. ❖

Church Library and Bookstore Re-Open

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

The *First Universalist Library and Bookstore* will re-open on September 8, and will remain open during coffee hour for the rest of the regular church year.

Our lending library has a distinctive collection of books on Unitarian-Universalism, world religions and other topics of interest to religious liberals. Books may be borrowed by members or by friends who have attended our church long enough to get a name tag. We ask borrowed books be returned or renewed after three weeks. If you have a library book you borrowed last spring, please return or renew it as soon as convenient.

Our bookstore sells new books that we order from the UUA Bookstore at our cost. Any discounts are passed on to buyers. We also sell used books that are donated to us for 50 cents or less. All the used books that have been carried over from last spring have been reduced in price to 25 cents. We have a shelf of children's books we sell for 25 cents.

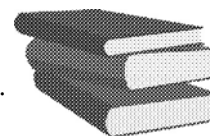
If you have books that you no longer want, but you think other people would like to read, please consider donating them to the church bookstore. They may be left in the bookstore area, preferably during coffee hour. We are especially interested in good novels, books about religion, philosophy and current affairs, and cookbooks and gardening books. We are less interested in out-of-date textbooks, travel books and buying guides, and *Reader's Digest* condensed books.

If you like books and like people, please consider joining the Library Committee. Your responsibility would be to staff the library and bookstore once a month, and attend a committee meeting no oftener than once every two months. Speak to Phil Ebersole if you are interested. ❖

September Book Discussion Group

Submitted by Eileen Fernandez

"The Plague of Doves" by Louise Erdrich
We will be meeting at noon on Sept. 22.
Everyone is welcome.



187th Annual Meeting of the New York State Convention of Universalists

Submitted by Joyce Gilbert, President, NYSCU

St. Paul's Universalist Church in Little Falls, NY
October 25 & 26, 2013

Keynote Speaker, Christine Hart
Policy Associate
Policy and Government Affairs
Women Thrive Worldwide

Chrissy joined Women Thrive in December 2012. As Policy and Government Affairs Associate, she provides support across Thrive's various portfolios, including girls' education, economic opportunity, food security, foreign assistance reform, and gender-based violence.

Chrissy holds an M.A. in International Human Rights with concentrations in Human Trafficking & Contemporary Slavery and International Human Rights Law from the University of Denver's Josef Korbel School of International Studies, and a B.A. in Political Science and History from Colgate University. Her passion for global women's issues took root when she served as a Peace Corps volunteer in the area of girls' education and empowerment in rural Burkina Faso.

MOCHA Volunteers Needed

Submitted by Bill Elwell

Many hands make light work. That is true for those conscientious volunteers who each Sunday make sure that our Coffee Hour (Ministry of Coffee Hour Activity) continues to be a vital part of our Sunday service. Approximately once every eight weeks, two of these volunteers bring in the food, (reimbursed) that provides the fuel for our keeping in touch with members, friends and visitors.

We have several people who have done this service for several years now and as with other volunteer positions with our church community, we need other members and friends to step up and serve on Sunday mornings. If you are willing to serve in this capacity, please contact Bill or Becky Elwell at 426-1519. We'll match you up with another member. ❖

Upon returning from her Peace Corps service, she joined the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice & Human Rights. Her experiences working with grassroots human rights defenders at the RFK Center drove her to pursue graduate studies in the field of human rights. As a graduate student, Chrissy served as Associate Director of the University of Denver's Human Trafficking Clinic and conducted field research on human trafficking in the Philippines and on issues facing youth in post-conflict northern Uganda.

Chrissy lives in Washington, D.C. When she isn't working to bring the voices of women and girls to policymakers in Washington, you can find her running, hiking, cycling, or skiing.

Editor's note:

Chrissy is a born UU from the Niagara Frontier of New York. She's also the youngest person to deliver the NYSCU keynote since Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1956. ❖

Witness Palestine Rochester – Second Annual Film Series

September 8th – 23rd

At the Little Theatre

Tickets \$8 per showing at the Little box office

- Sept 8 at 2.00 pm: *5 Broken Cameras* - Nominated for an Academy Award® in 2013
- Sept 9 at 6.45 pm: *The Law in These Parts*
- Sept 15 at 2.00 pm: *Jerusalem East Side Story and Follow the Money*
- Sept 16 at 6.45 pm: *The People and the Olive*
- Sept 22 at 2.00 pm: *Two-Sided Story*

At St John Fisher College – Free; no tickets required
Sept 23 at 12.30 pm: *Going Against the Grain*

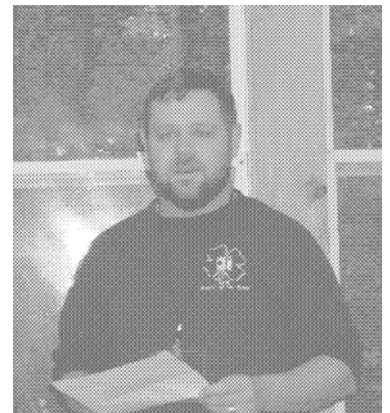
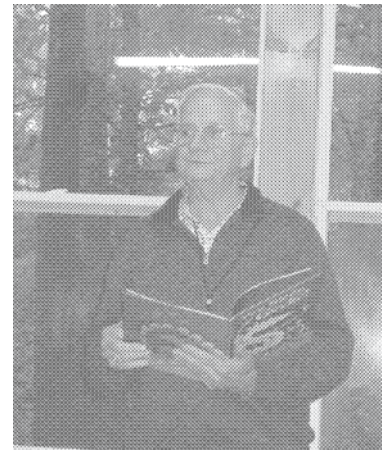
All screenings will be followed by panel discussions.

More information at **WitnessPalestineRochester.org** and on Facebook. ❖

Gathering of Men, 2013

Submitted by Tom Williams

Over the weekend of June 7,8,9 seven men from our congregation attended the **23rd annual UU Gathering of Men**. Nineteen men in all attended from congregations across the *St. Lawrence District*. The event always starts with Friday evening dinner prepared by the first men to arrive, and then dinner is followed by an Opening Circle. During the opening circle everyone shares something about themselves and we all get acquainted, we discuss workshops that people have brought with them and then schedule events for the following full day. On Saturday, the day consists of about 6 workshops in three different time slots throughout the day. There is also a free time period where attendees can enjoy a hike, a canoe/kayak adventure, play board games, or just veg out/take a nap. In the evening, after dinner, is the Coffeehour/Talent Show. This year, the 7 men from First Universalist pooled their talents and formed the First Universalist Choir and sang together for the rest of the attendees. On Sunday morning, there is another workshop time slot, followed by a Sunday Service and a Closing Circle. During the weekend, all meals are prepared by the attendees, meal time is a workshop in itself and much camaraderie is built during meal preparation. When the weekend is over, many friendships have been made and old friendships renewed. It's always a wonderful weekend, and the 7 of us invite other men from the congregation to join us next **June 6,7,8** for the **24th Annual Gathering of Men**. ❖

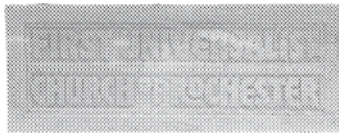


Pictured (from left)

Tom Ruganis
Michael Scott
Tom Williams
Tim Mullins
Steve Farrington
Bill Elwell
David Damico

Auld Lang Syne

Submitted by Karen Dau, archivist



ISAAC P. CODDINGTON, the fifth settled minister of this congregation, was born in New York City on February 14, 1858 and passed away on August 24, 1912 in Medford, Massachusetts. His father died while he was young and he helped support his family. At one time he was employed by Phineas T. Barnum, of circus fame. Barnum saw qualities in him that might not have been obvious to a casual observer, and made arrangements for him to enroll in St. Lawrence University, a Universalist institution in Canton, NY. Afterward Coddington entered the theological seminary there, graduating in 1880 with the degree of bachelor of divinity.

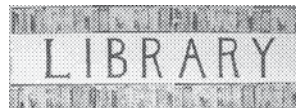
Rev. Coddington preached his first sermon in Rochester on the 8th of December in 1898, in a former church only two blocks from here. He came with grand plans for his ministry and succeeded in garnering the support of his parishioners. As a result the church building was extensively renovated in 1901 and with the generous financial aid of the wealthy lock manufacturer James Sargent and his wife Angelina, a religious education wing was added. The labors culminated in a joyful celebration in October of 1901. During the following year the entire debt load of the congregation—including two mortgages—was paid off, and on December 5 that year a Jubilee was held which featured the burning of those mortgages.

But as a result of all his intense labors in this major undertaking, Rev. Coddington's health began to deteriorate, and in April 1902 he experienced a fainting spell which may have been a minor stroke. He arranged to take a respite vacation, but in New York City he was stricken with aphasia, a condition, usually caused by brain injury, that may range from forgetting words to the inability to speak, read, or write. He stayed with the Sargents at their summer home in the Thousand Islands, then in September the church authorized a two-month vacation for him which he passed in Europe. His return was celebrated at the Jubilee previously mentioned. During the previous summer St. Lawrence University had conferred a Doctor of Divinity degree upon him.

By the autumn of 1904 he felt he could not longer continue serving, and he turned in a resignation. However, his parishioners dissuaded him until the spring of 1905, when he wrote: "You have sought to make it as easy as you possibly could for me. I am, however, thoroughly convinced that I am not equal to the great responsibility and heavy burden of this naturally exacting parish." Your writer wonders what he must have felt when he learned only two years later, while serving a smaller parish in New Hampshire, that after all the arduous work and considerable expense of restoring the Rochester building, it would soon be going on a date with a wrecking ball, and in 1908 his former parishioners would have a new church home only two blocks away. ❖

Reaching for the Infinite

Submitted by Keith Stott



Do you agree with the prophet that we are "like an old and strong tree whose roots grasped into the depths of the earth and whose branches reached the Infinite"? Did your soul blossom? How many of us have reached hard for the Infinite? Jesus? Claude Bragdon? Mohammed? Confucius? Handsome Lake? John Murray? You? Me?

In his book *Between Morn and Night*, Kahlil Gibran, author of *The Prophet*, seeks to apply with a blend of fiction and poetry, "the ancient wisdom of the East... with a remarkable timeliness to man's present problems." Reading this book may boost you closer to the *Blessed Infinite*.

Call number is FIC G. ❖

House Report Highlights - September 2013

Submitted by Alain Perregaux

Special Thanks. On June 28, the restoration of the two chancel chairs and of the pulpit was completed by the furniture restorer Gaylon Arnold. This extra step in the improvement of our worship space was given to the Church by Richard and Joyce Gilbert. It is with great pleasure that we express our profound gratitude to them for this very special gift that the whole congregation will be able to enjoy.

Sanctuary Renovation.

Luckily, the last elements of the carpet installation, mostly on the balcony stairs, were complete before Steve Farrington's wedding on July 27. By then the new lights had also been installed and the front of the sanctuary could be flooded with light.

By now, all the new cushions are in house. They have been installed on the main floor and on the North balcony. The South balcony cannot be open for use yet because it is still used as a storage area for the remaining old cushions which we are disposing of little by little. On Sunday August 18, the display cases were moved to their planned locations along the West wall of the sanctuary. The objects to be displayed are still to be retrieved from their temporary storage and placed where they belong.

Two last details are still waiting completion:

- The undercover wooden boards under the balcony stairs, above the radiators, need to be manufactured and installed; they had been missing for years and we decided that it was the right time to take care of this finishing touch.

- The fixed panel of the North Clinton Avenue entrance door was in very bad shape and could only be opened with heroic measures; it will be nice in the future to be able to have this entrance wide open for formal occasions.

As for the total cost of this exercise, after the last invoices for roughly \$1800 are received, it will be approximately \$196,000. Based on the quotes that the renovation committee had received, the anticipated total cost had been \$182,300. The difference is due mostly to unexpected discoveries such as pews falling apart as they were detached from the floor and the need for safety devices for the maintenance of the new lights. However, we are still well below the ceiling of \$210,000 authorized by the board.

House Committee.

As the work of the Renovation Committee winds down, the activities of the House Committee must pick up again. The parking lot needs touch-up repairs, planning for the replacement of the roof must begin, and general maintenance nitty-gritties must be followed up. Our next Clean-up Day will have to be planned for some time in October.

The August inspection of the elevator was done on August 8. We are good to go for another 6 months. ❖

The First Universalist Community Garden

Submitted by Sarah Singal

First Universalist is planning a community garden, a site in the Rochester Lots of Food project. We have selected a preliminary design to begin this summer and fall, and additions can be made in the future; we wanted to start small and slowly so we can make improvements as we proceed. The southwest alcove outside our sanctuary near Clinton Avenue now has some stones to even off the surface, water permeable landscaping cloth for a weed barrier, a central area where some of the cement has been removed (thank you, Rev. Lori Staubitz!), and a generous layer of tree mulch.

If all goes according to plan, by the time this Outlook arrives, we will have assembled three frames to enclose three raised beds. Our proposed design so far includes a central small pear tree in addition to the beds, and surrounding paths. Future additions could include several large planters, constituting memorials. The organic food that will be grown will be available to passersby. Visit lotsoffood.org to learn more about this urban public food movement, and join us in the construction, planting and care of our garden. See Sarah Singal, Connie Valk, or Shirley Bond (ssingal@rochester.rr.com; cvalk@frontiernet.net; bondshirl@yahoo.com). ❖



First Universalist Church

150 South Clinton Avenue
Rochester, NY 14604

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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

Director of Religious Education | Rev. Lori Staubit

Music Director | Bryan Holten

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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