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Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY

January 2017

Sunday Services | January 2017

January 1 | *Fire Communion*

Join us the first Sunday in January for our annual Fire Communion Service This service is a time of reflection about the year that has passed and a time of renewal for the New Year we are entering.

- Tom Williams Worship Associate

**January 8 | *Do Justice***

- Celie Katovitch

**January 15 | *Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday***

- Celie Katovitch

**January 22 - *Love Mercy***

- Celie Katovitch

**January 29 - *Walk Humbly***

- Celie Katovitch

Happy New Year.





Pastor's Perspective

Message from Rev. Celie Katovitch

Dear friends,

Happy new year! 2016 was a difficult year for many, both personally and due to events in the world. Yet, 2017 has already begun on an auspicious note for us here at church. As you know if you witnessed the party flash-mob on the Sunday before Christmas, our social justice discernment task force has developed initial steps for us to consider as we seek to channel better our justice work as a congregation, in order to have a more powerful impact. Abundant thanks to our team - Dick Gilbert, Connie Valk, and Eric Van Dusen - for all their inspired work. Please take time to read their report, which will soon be posted on the church website. This work is both exciting and timely, in our current national climate.

A word about sermon titles for January: In the political sphere, there is often a good deal of talk about 'religious values.' Usually, that term is dubiously used to justify particular conservative positions on select issues. Our hymnal includes a passage from the prophet Micah that has long been an inspiration to people of diverse faith backgrounds and political opinions, and which presents a different view. Micah gives this summation of what it really looks like to live religious values: "What is required of you but to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?" This month we will explore the prophet's ancient, but still resonant, words.

We send prayers and good thoughts with the several people from our congregation who will be going down to Washington at the end of this month for the Million Women March. May they have courage and be a witness for justice. There are a number of events with a similar justice focus happening in Rochester this month, including one right here in Washington Square Park, for those wishing to join in such efforts.

Finally, thank you for your wonderful generosity during the holiday season, in which we provided mittens and

hats, blankets, and needed funds to many in great need, from those at the new Bridge Home, to a RAIHN family, to people right in our immediate church neighborhood here downtown. Generosity is a profound and holy gift in this congregation.

With deep gratitude, wishing you a blessed start to the year. --Celie ❖

Winter Office Hours at Bausch and Lomb:

For January and February, Rev. Celie's community office hours will be held in Wintergarden (first floor of the Bausch and Lomb building, kitty-corner from First Universalist), Thursdays from 1-2. Come enjoy a cup of coffee and listen to birds singing in the palm trees amidst the winter cold! ❖

Thank You!

For your generosity in our December collection for holiday bonuses for staff. Your amazing gift (of more than \$2000 total) was very gratefully received. Thank you for your kind affirmation of the wonderful work that Michelle, Stacey, Melissa, Brandon, Carol, and Monica do - and thank you for nurturing a church where they are cherished.

Faithfully, ~Celie ❖

Return Guest at Your Table Boxes-Jan. 15th!

Submitted by Michelle Yates

A big thank you to all who decided to participate in the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's (UUSC) annual Guest at Your Table Campaign. You can bring in your change, cash, or checks on January 15th for the church to send to the UUSC, or you can send your donation directly to the UUSC at 689 Massachusetts Ave. Cambridge, MA 02139-3302 or donate online at www.uusc.org. ❖



Walking Together:

Director of Life Span Faith Development

Submitted by Michelle Yates, DRE

Our Faith Development theme for January comes from the fourth line of our Affirmation of Faith, “to dwell together in PEACE”

This reminds me of how we as Unitarian Universalists covenant together; agree how we will be together. What are the agreements we make in our families, churches, neighborhoods, or countries about how we behave and treat each other? What are the agreements that help you to build trust and to feel safe in these relationships? These are the ways we build and create peace.

This month you will hear about some new Small Group Ministry groups starting. These groups are grounded in the covenant that they create together.

As I gathered quotes about peace, the word that grabbed me was compassion. As I look at those who are hurting most in the world, I think, “that could be me.” If the cosmic lottery had turned out differently. If a distant ancestor had made a different choice. If I had turned right and not left.

The phrase that comes to mind is “There, but for the grace of god, go I.” While it very poetically captures the thought, “that could be me,” it also has theological undertones that I struggle with.

A year ago my sister-in-law’s mother died of cancer. This week my mother was deemed to be in remission. “There, but for the grace of god, go I.” Yet I don’t believe for one second in a god that decided my sister-in-law’s mother should die, but mine should live. My mother was not more virtuous than her mother. She is not less deserving than I to have her mother still. It is only a thin veil of luck and circumstance separates us from others, but luck or tragedy must never be interpreted as divine ordinance. “Divine grace” is the way we hold and support each other in the midst of tragedy; the way we hold together when life pulls us apart.

So much of war or violence is based on fighting to prove one side is more worthy than the other; not seeing that we are one, and an injury to one is an injury to all. How do we as Unitarian Universalists reconcile this reality, and move toward peace and justice grounded in our 1st and 7th principles: The inherent worth and dignity of every person, and Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part?

“When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace.”

— Jimi Hendrix

“Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.”

— Albert Einstein

“Peace is more than the absence of war. Peace is accord. Harmony.”

— Laini Taylor, Daughter of Smoke & Bone

“World peace must develop from inner peace. Peace is not just mere absence of violence. Peace is, I think, the manifestation of human compassion.”

— Dalai Lama XIV ❖

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Small Group Ministries are Coming!

Submitted by Michelle Yates

Also known as “covenant groups” and “chalice circles,” Small Group Ministry is a vital part of many Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregations. Groups of 8-12 people meet regularly, once or twice a month, to reflect on and discuss significant life topics. Small groups are great places to get to know other people and to get to know yourself. Over time, participants build deep connections with one another, with the congregation and with the sacred.

Stay tuned for information on two new Small Group Ministries starting soon! ❖

History and Operations of ecopark



Submitted by Sarah Singal

Eight UUs toured the Monroe County drop-off recycling center on a chilly November day to hear Tom Sinclair explain the history and the operations of ecopark. A fraction of the history we learned: the facility started as a place to bring hazardous materials. It opened in 1991 and has gradually morphed into a complex drop-off recycling and waste transfer station.

Hazardous waste requires an appointment, so that they are prepared to process the items you will bring. The most frequently received item is paint, but they also accept all sorts of other chemicals. You drive right up to a large opening in ecopark's wall, remain in your car, and the ecopark personnel distribute your offerings to the correct sites. When the various receptacles are full, ecopark employees take them to the next site, such as a special impervious land fill, a high tech land fill in Riga, a burning facility in the Buffalo area (some of the chemicals are used as fuel for the burn).

Another important category of the hazardous materials collection is pharmaceutical waste. In 2006 the US Geological Survey found that traces of drugs were present in lakes, rivers, and drinking water. Ecopark began a drug diversion operation in 2008. Bring your old pills in prescription bottles with lids; over-the-counter medication is also accepted. You can block out your name, although it isn't necessary. The bottles are placed into containers that cannot be opened, similar to a sharps container. (Pharmacies may accept drugs from time to time, and some sheriff offices have drop boxes for drugs; check with your municipality.)

The warehouse adjacent to the hazardous materials room was initially empty, but now functions as collection site



Unitarian Universalists from Clinton and Winton on a tour of eco park.

for all sorts of special items. It is open for drop-offs without appointment Wednesdays 1-6:30pm and Saturdays 7:30am-1pm. Ecopark does NOT accept: 55-gallon drums, asbestos, bullet flares, gunpowder, explosives (call 911), dried paint can or liquid paint less than 1/3 full (add kitty litter and throw dried material in trash), alkaline batteries (trash), industrial use products, used motor oil (contact service station or retailer), glazing/joint/spackle compounds (trash). Other than those items they will probably accept pretty much anything you are trying to discard. Check the website.

The bottom line: everyday recycling is easiest using the curbside bins provided by your municipality. You can bring other items to ecopark when you have accumulated enough or cleared out enough in spring-cleaning to justify the trip. We plan to lead a caravan to ecopark during April, Earth month. Start your sorting now and join us! Address is 10 Avion Way, near Monroe County Airport (monroecounty.gov/ecopark). ♦

Social Justice Plate News

Submitted by Shirley Bond

Happy New Year! The Social Justice Plate Committee has chosen Metro Justice to be our January 15th recipient. Metro Justice has been in existence for 50 years and receives no funding other than through donations and membership dues.

They tirelessly work for Climate change Action, a Single Payer Health Plan for NYS, Elder Care, Fight for Fifteen to mention just a few. Metro Justice also consistently finances bus loads of members and friends to Albany. Please help them fight for a new world of genuine equality and freedom for all people. Thank-you Becky Elwell, Marcia Weaver, Shirley Bond. ♦

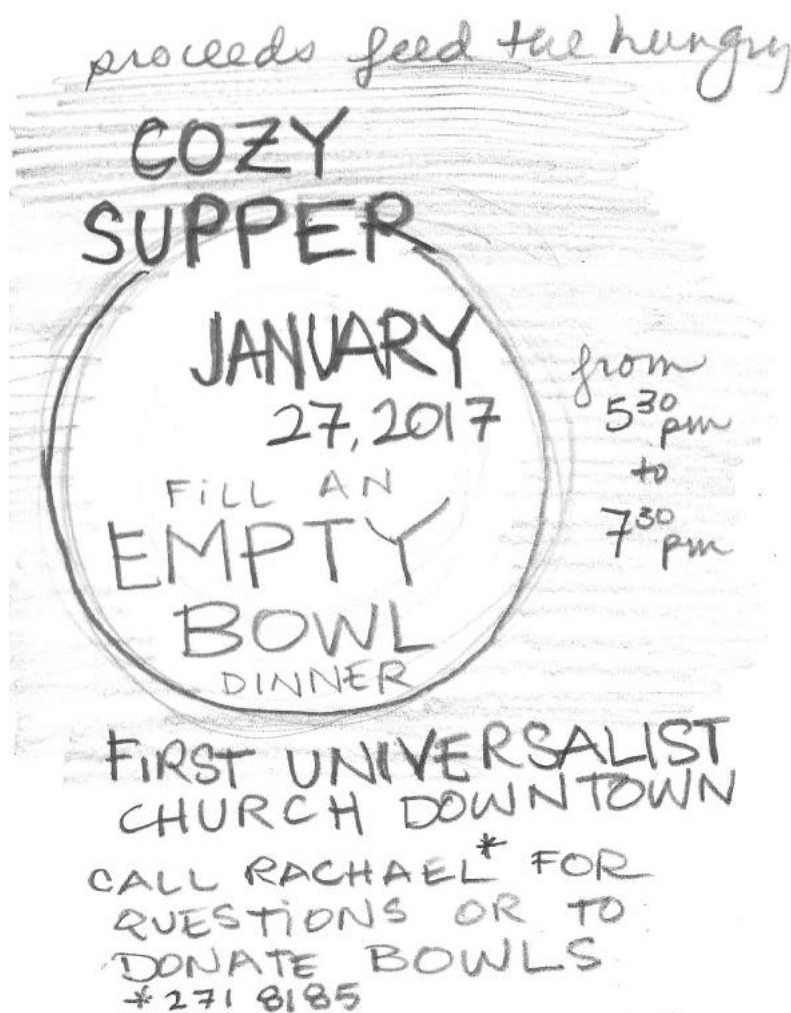
Cozy Night Supper, Friday, Jan. 27

Submitted by Kathy Russell

Our next COZY NIGHT SUPPER for the 2016-17 church year will be Friday, January 27th. This dinner, from 5:30 to 7:30, will be held in the Clara Barton Lounge. A simple supper, including a vegan option, will be provided along with wonderful camaraderie - hopefully including you! Mitch Gruber from Foodlink will be the guest speaker. Donations can go to Foodlink as well. You will choose your dinner bowl from a variety of hand made local bowls and for a donation will be able to take this home, with a full stomach and the knowledge you contributed toward a local agency fighting hunger in Rochester. An agency representative will provide an informal program giving us a perspective on our current situation.

Let us know of your ability to attend by signing up on the Religious Education Bulletin Board in the Clara Barton Lounge or by contacting Kathy Russell at krussel6@frontiernet.net. Your RSVP/sign up allows us to prepare appropriately. Child-friendly activities will be arranged if you make a request one week in advance.

Cooks, bakers and kitchen support are always needed. If you are able to help providing part of



the meal (expenses reimbursed) or at the dinner itself please contact Kathy. And for those who like to plan ahead, our final dinner will be Friday, March 3rd. ♦

The Book Club *Submitted by Shirley Bond*

The book choice for January is "Americanah" by Chimamanda Adichie, a Nigerian author who has experienced first hand the differences and similarities of both the Nigerian culture and the American one. Through her storytelling, she helps us see the importance of understanding race, cultural identification within races and certain quirks associated with each and every race. The book has a suspenseful narrative which helps move the plot along.

We hope you will join us on **January 29th at 12 noon** in the discussion room second floor!

It isn't necessary to have read the book, but hope you have time to fit it into your schedule. Happy New Year!

Shirley Bond at Bondshirl1@gmail.com or
Sarah Singal at ssingal@Rochester.rr.com ♦



Living Our Values, Making A Difference

Submitted by Newcomb Losh

Metro Justice Post Election Panel

On Dec. 13, about 200-250 people, including several of our members and friends, met in our sanctuary to get answers to their post-election activism questions.



Among our members and friends who were in attendance were... **Dick Gilbert** (center)...



... and **Tom and Karen Ruganis**.



Metro Justice's post-election panel of community leaders comprising (l to r) Colin O'Malley (Organizing Director, Metro Justice), Chanel Snead of BLACK (Building Leadership and Community Knowledge), Renan Salgado (Worker Justice Center of NY), Iman Abid (NY ACLU), Betty DeFazio (Director of Community Affairs & Public Policy - Planned Parenthood Rochester/Syracuse Region), and event moderator Denise Young (President, Metro Justice).

Bridge Home Meal

A few members of our Homelessness Task Force, organized by Lois Baum, prepared and served dinner on Dec. 7 at REACH's Bridge Home on Ontario Street to 40 people who were homeless. REACH stands for Rochester Emergency Action Committee for the Homeless.

(l to r) **Greg Baum, Ed Deller, Dave VanArsdale, Connie Valk, Lois Baum** and **Bill Elwell** were happy to serve.

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



Photo by Deacon Dan Callan

Thank you...

From the Finance Team to our wonderful congregation:

Thank you...

For your generous contributions for staff bonuses! The Board was able to distribute a meaningful bonus to each of our employees, who were greatly appreciative.

Next up... the Annual Service Auction! February 5, 2017.

It's our big fundraiser, and so much fun! Members and friends donate services or goods... perhaps a dinner, outing, or specialty item, and the bidding begins! It's a user-friendly event which takes place after the worship service and lunch in the lounge.

How to get started? Think about what YOU can donate and place up for bid in the auction. Donation forms are available at church or via e-mail (pmarchese@rochester.rr.com) OR donate online at uuroc.org. Donations must be received by Wednesday, January 25 in order to be in the auction booklet. AND be sure to plan to attend the auction on February 5. Don't miss out on the fun!

Pledge Payment Options Explained

At First Universalist, we are blessed with members who support the church by making, and paying, pledges. The finance team wants to make paying your pledge as convenient for you as possible, even as are streamlining and moving more toward paperless operation. Here are some ways for you to pay your annual pledge to church:

- You can write a paper check, and drop it into the plate on Sunday. Please note "pledge" in the memo line.
- You can send a check to the church via US mail.
- Many banks offer Online Bill Pay as an option. Set the church up as a payee, and you can authorize a pledge payment to be sent to the church on a one-time or recurring basis.
- You can make a cash payment by putting cash in an envelope, labeled with your name and "pledge." You can put the envelope in the Sunday collection plate, or bring it to the office to be put in the safe. It is never recommended to send cash through the mail.
- Pledge payments can be made on any schedule that works for you. Some members pay in one lump sum, others pay monthly or weekly.
- Still others pay at random times based on their own finances.

While some organizations have been able to set up the use of credit cards, online payments through the website, or direct ACH transfers, our church has not yet been able to do these things in a cost-effective way. We would rather see your pledge dollars spent helping the church to fulfill its mission, than paying large percentages in credit card or bank fees.

Your generosity and commitment to the church makes it a pleasure to serve on the Finance Team! Thank you for your support. ✦

RAIHN* Dates

Submitted by Marti Eggers



Next First-Level Volunteer Training Sessions –

- Tuesday, January 24, 2017, 6:30 pm, Artisan Church, 1235 S. Clinton Ave., Rochester
- Wednesday, February 8, 2017, 6:30 pm, St. Louis Catholic Church, 64 S. Main St., Pittsford



Volunteers are expected to attend a two-hour training session before or soon after volunteering for the first time. Training sessions orient volunteers to the RAIHN philosophy and the expectations of guests and volunteers. There is ample time for questions as well. Seasoned

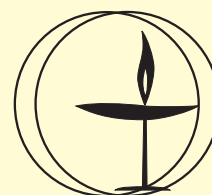
volunteers are also welcome and provide valuable input based on their personal experiences.

Please RSVP at 506-9050 or coordinator@raihn.org.

Next Host Week at First Universalist

- March 26th – April 2nd

* *Keeping families together; getting families home for good.* ✦



Mindfulness & Meditation

Submitted by Kathy Russell

Join us for an introduction and “show and tell” on Mindfulness & Meditation from 9:15 to 10am in the back of the sanctuary before our January 22nd Sunday service. Glenda’s Renaissance group SANCTUARY will provide some ethereal music, Reverend Celie will offer a few readings and there will be an opportunity to “sit” quietly and to ask questions. ♦



The day returns and brings us the petty rounds of irritating concerns and duties. Help us [to face them] with laughter and kind faces; let cheerfulness abound with industry. Give us to go blithely on our business all this day, bring us to our resting beds weary and content and undishonored, and grant us in the end the gift of sleep. Amen

Universalist Publishing House, 1940.



It's Coming: Auction 2017!



Our annual service auction is scheduled for Sunday, February 5 after the service. Donation forms will be available on the church’s website in early January, so you can spend your December dreaming of what you can bring to the auction table! Be part of the fun by donating a service, item, or experience; by volunteering to help, and of course, by attending the auction and participating! Contact Paula Marchese (pmarchese@rochester.rr.com) for information. ♦



News

America's Real Religion?

Written in 1949 and reprinted for the Bicentennial in 1976 *America's Real Religion: The Struggle for the Mind of America* by Rev. A. Powell Davies, then minister at All Souls Church in Washington D.C., ties the beliefs of the Founding Fathers, the religion of Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln, and the beliefs of General Eisenhower together. He asserts that Americans are not so much attached to formal creeds as they are to democratic faith. He also includes the “religion of fear” as a counter balance to what are now considered basic UU beliefs.

In 1949 Dr. Davies perceived evidence of the dangerous challenges of allowing authoritarianism of any kind to gain a spiritual initiative in America. He believed that “democracy has a religious base, and that it is possible to believe strongly in democracy if you believe in the religion that sustains it.”

An interesting read for these politically challenging times. **Call number is 973 D.**

Addendum: Submitted by Philip Ebersole

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

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

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



Drop-In Discussion Schedule, Jan. 2017

Submitted by Phil Ebersole

Drop-in discussions are held at 9:15 a.m. (except during the summer) each Sunday in the Chalice Room on the second floor of our church. Sometimes our discussions are based on certain books or articles, but you don't have to read anything or do any advance preparation to participate. Just drop in. People of all viewpoints are welcome to make presentations or join in the discussions.

January 1 | *Open Forum Discussion.* No set topic.

January 8 | *Escalating Inequality*

Most of us think that it is wrong that some people have too little. But is this because other people have too much? Is having too much wrong, in and of itself? Phil Ebersole will lead a discussion of these questions. Escalating Inequality is a UU Congregational Study-Action Issue for 2014–2018.

January 15 | *Poor White People in America*

Poor, landless whites are often a disparaged and manipulated group, yet they have been here in America since Colonial times. They are to be found largely in rural areas from Maine to Florida and throughout the West. Where did they come from? How have they fit into American society in the past and what part do they play in the shaping of it now? What would help them elevate themselves in a way that will preserve their self-respect without undermining that of other groups? Janus Mary Jones will lead a discussion, drawing on the book, *White Trash: the 400-Year Untold History of Class in America* by Nancy Isenberg.

January 22 | *What Is Spirituality?*

One of the seven affirmations of Unitarian Universalism is to promote “spiritual growth” in our congregations. What is spiritual growth? spiritual experience? spiritual practice? Can you be spiritual but not religious? religious but not spiritual? Phil Ebersole, who is not especially spiritual, will lead a discussion.

January 29 | *Bless Our Roots (2)*

Using a questionnaire distributed by David Malone at our Dec. 18 discussion, we'll explore and share our diverse backgrounds. Phil Ebersole will facilitate.

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

House News - January 2017

Submitted by Tom Ruganis

Winter is finally here and with it comes cold and snow. Speaking of cold, the part of the heating system that services the east half of the building (Clara Barton Lounge, the offices, RE wing etc.) was out of service for about two days. The defective pump was replaced and the heat returned. Precautions were taken to prevent frozen pipes with overnight lows sinking into single digits. Fortunately the Sunday service in the sanctuary was not affected. Rumors were that iced coffee was being served at coffee hour.

And speaking of snow, a replacement snow-blower was purchased and is ready for the next storm. Let us hope it does not get too much use. That is, of course, unless you actually like snow.

The door from the Court Street vestibule to the Church office was removed, repaired and returned. This is the first step in renovating the office. The remainder of the work is scheduled for the first week of January.

The group chartered to provide recommendations for the Clara Barton Lounge is making progress with a meeting with an interior designer scheduled for late December. Please continue to stay tuned.

The saga of the dishwasher repair is nearing an end. All chemical lines were replaced and once a defective pump (yes, another defective pump) is replaced all will be good to go.

As always, if you are interested in the above or have any other repair or project you would like to see completed, or would like to take on, please let anyone on the committee know. The Committee is currently: Tom Ruganis, Chair (tom.ruganis@frontier.com), Sarah Singal, Karen Dau, Marcy Klein, Mike VanArsdale, Michael Scott and Ed Deller. We would love to hear from you! ❖



First Universalist Church

150 South Clinton Avenue
Rochester, NY 14604

First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY

Nurture the spirit and serve the community

First Universalist Church is a member of the Unitarian-Universalist Association, a liberal religion with historical roots from the Jewish and Christian traditions.

Worship service begins at 10:30am Sundays

Minister | Rev. Celie Katovitch

Director of Life Span Faith Development | Michelle Yates

Music Director | Stacey Yang

Sexton | Brandon Fagan

Nursery Care Provider | Carol Williams

Office Administrator | Melissa Davies

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

Board Of Trustees 2016-2017

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Editor, *This Week at First Universalist* (digital): Melissa Davies; Monthly newsletter *Our Outlook*, David Damico. Church photo on cover by Tom Ruganis.

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