

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 10:00am Sundays

- Summer Minister | Peter House
- Director of Life Span Faith Development | Michelle Yates
- Music Director | To Be Announced
- Sexton | Brandon Fagan
- Nursery Care Provider | Carol Williams
- Office Administrator | Kris White

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

Board Of Trustees 2014–2015

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Visit us online [www.uuroc.org](http://www.uuroc.org)

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Our Outlook

First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY July 2015

Sunday Summer Services | July 2015

July 5 | *What Is Time if We’re Not Mindful of It?*  
Mindfulness is “all the rage” these days, but it is a timeless concept. I will share this updated version of a sermon which I wrote in 1999 which incorporates what I’ve learned about mindfulness since then.  
-Peter House (Summer minister)



July 12 | *The Limits of Liberalism*  
UU s pride ourselves on our tolerance. Is it possible to be TOO tolerant? I’ll share my answer to this question.  
-Peter House (Summer minister)



July 19 | *Most Teacher Aides Fit Through the Eye of a Needle*  
The Bible says it’s easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven – reflections on the value of money, and what it can and can’t buy.  
-Peter House (Summer minister)



July 26 | *Successful Long-term Marriage—Is There Still A Secret?*  
Eleven years ago, Larry and Jerianne delivered a sermon titled, “Successful Long-term Marriage—Is There a Secret.” By popular demand, they have been invited to revisit the topic. The presentation will reflect the insights gained by over 50 years of marriage. Their conclusions, they believe, apply to both gay and straight marriages and probably to couples not formally married, but still living in a committed relationship. If you weren’t here 11 years ago, you may be in for some surprises  
-Jerianne and Larry Barnes

Summer service begins at 10am





# Minister’s Message

Message from Peter House

I have spoken and written about the wonderful gardens which my partner Michael maintains around our house. He packs a lot of greenery into an ordinary city lot. And because it IS a city lot, there is a lot of foot traffic past our house. And sometimes, as a result, we have a plant casualty. Passersby will occasionally pick flowers, inadvertently break stems, or accidentally step on a budding bulb. But out-and-out vandalism is quite rare.

Sadly, a minor case of it happened last week, and it really got me down. We have been following with growing concern the plight of our honeybees and butterflies, and in an effort to help them, we have been leaving “weeds” in our beds which appeal to these beneficial insects. Along our front walk, we had allowed several volunteer milkweeds to thrive, and they were just about to flower when someone yanked them all out, and left them wilting on the walk. Perhaps it was someone’s misguided attempt to help us with our weeding, but it left me feeling deflated and violated.

“How dare someone presume to touch OUR milkweed?” I asked. In the next breath I was declaring to Michael “That’s it! We are moving to the country! I want to get away from the city. In the country, our plants would be safe from such acts of mischief”.

“It’s true that in the country people would probably leave our plants alone, but there are deer and rabbits, and many other animals out there that we don’t have to worry about in the city” Michael pointed out to me.

Of course, he is right. We all at times, fantasize about finding a secure sanctuary – it’s human nature to want to feel safe. The suburbs developed largely out of this longing for asylum, a refuge “away” from the world and its threats. But there is no safe haven, and no such place as “away”. As the world becomes more and more populated, and the biosphere’s resources stretched farther and farther, this is more true today than at any time in human history.

In fact, it could be argued that our efforts to get “away” from the world, have made things worse instead of better. Urban sprawl, colonization, deforestation, and constant migration have made the world a LESS secure place. It

could be argued that America itself is an artificial and fragile attempt at getting “away” from the problems faced by the majority of the world’s people. We are close to exhausting our earth’s capacity to provide places to “get away”, and maybe that isn’t all bad. Maybe when we can no longer escape, we will engage the world as it really is, and not as we’d like it to be.

Perhaps this is what being a Universalist means in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. ❖

. . . . .

# Children’s Programming takes the Summer off...

...But our love for our kids and families does not!

Please let us know if you will be visiting with children during the summer so we can support and welcome you! Email or call Michelle at edu@uuroc.org or 585-310-2484.

The nursery is normally closed for the summer. If you would like to request nursery care in July or August please email edu@uuroc.org by the Wednesday before.

There is no Children’s Worship programming during the summer weeks. Please look for Pew Pals bags at the door to the sanctuary to help engage children during service. If your child becomes anxious, you may prefer to listen to the service in the Clara Barton Lounge. The children’s corner in the Lounge is supplied with toys, games and other activities.

Our normal nursery and children’s programming will resume on Sunday, Sept. 13th at our Ingathering/ Water Ceremony. Have a safe and fabulous summer!!! ❖

# Membership

Submitted by Nancy Gaede

Please join me in welcoming our newest members. **Shelley Adams** and **Lois and Greg Baum** signed the membership book following the service on June 21st. Lois, Greg and Shelley, we are so very glad that you have found a spiritual home with us, and look forward to continuing the journey with each of you. Welcome! ❖



# Walking Together:

Director of Life Span Faith Development

Submitted by Michelle Yates, DRE

In his book *Deep is the Hunger*, Howard Thurman tells this story —

*I watched him for a long time. He was so busily engaged in his task that he did notice my approach until he heard my voice. Then he raised himself erect with all the slow dignity of a man who had exhausted the cup of haste to the very dregs. He was an old man. . . . Further talk between us revealed that he was planting a small grove of pecan trees. The little treelets were not more than two and a half or three feet in height. My curiosity was unbounded.*

*“Why did you not select larger trees so as to increase the possibility of your living to see them bear at least one cup of nuts?”*

*He fixed his eyes directly on my face....Finally he said, “These small trees are cheaper and I have very little money.”*

*“So you do not expect to live to see the trees reach sufficient maturity to bear fruit?”*

*“No, but is that important? All my life I have eaten fruit from trees that I did not plant, why should I not plant trees to bear fruit for those who may enjoy them long after I am gone. Besides, the man who plants because he will reap the harvest has no faith in life...”*

The fact is that **much of life is made up of reaping where we have not sown and planting where we shall never reap.** (DIH, 48–49)

In this growing season, consider the hands; seen and unseen, that have planted seeds that have nourished you. What is the **legacy** that has been handed down to you from your ancestors, teachers, colleagues? What legacies have been passed on to you that you want to make sure to pass on to others? ***Tell the family stories to the next generation.***

That cool thing about you—where did that come from? Consider what legacy you will leave behind. What is it you “plant” and “cultivate” that you may never see the final outcome? How does it define you as a person?

Happy Planting! ~Michelle ❖

# RAIHN\* by the Numbers - 2014

Submitted by Marti Eggers



**4,068** total number of bed nights  
**27** families served  
**50** children served  
**45** days, average length of stay  
**16,352** volunteer hours  
**12,200** meals served  
**90%** families remaining in permanent housing after one year

\* RAIHN, the Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network, is a consortium of 14 faith communities that host families in temporary need of housing, and 25 faith communities that provide volunteers and other support to the host congregations. First Universalist is a host congregation, supported by St. Mary’s, Aldersgate United Methodist Church of Greece and the Church of Love Faith Center. Four times a year, for a week each time, volunteers from these congregations work together to provide a welcoming, safe place for the families to come home to after a day at the RAIHN Center where they get help looking for housing and, for some, new employment. We prepare and serve a hot evening meal, help with homework, offer a lap, a story and a hug, a listening ear, a word of encouragement, overnight presence, breakfast and whatever else might be needed before the families return to their jobs or to the Center for another day of hard work. ❖

*(A) comparatively small portion of scripture bears on immortal life and the great end of our course. Conduct is three-fourths of life. This present life is the great pressing concern. . . . A solemn reserve is thrown over future life; the great emphasis is on the present time. This is precisely as it should be."*

*Phineas Taylor Barnum*



# Making A Difference

## OUR LIVES MATTER

Submitted by Newcomb Losh, Communications Committee



Lyle Jenks boards a Metro Justice “Fight for 15” bus to Buffalo to testify at the June 5th NYS Dept. of Labor’s Wage Board public hearing on increasing the minimum wage in the fast food industry. Prior to boarding, hearing attendees were cheered by fellow First Universalist Church members and friends Shirley Bond, Becky Elwell, Gary Levine, Sarah Singal, Connie Valk and Bridget Watts among others.

First Universalist Church members and friends gathered at Rochester’s Liberty Pole on June 5th to support fellow member Lyle Jenks and others leaving for the NYS Dept. of Labor’s Wage Board hearing in Buffalo on increasing the minimum wage in the fast food industry. The “Fight for 15” rally and buses were organized by Metro Justice. Pictured in the crowd from l to r: Becky Elwell, Shirley Bond, Gary Levine, Sarah Singal, Bridget Watts and Connie Valk.



Joined by Rural & Migrant Ministry Executive Director the Rev. Richard Witt (far left), R&MM intern Guillermo Valdez explained farm workers’ struggles with social justice to a group of 18 people at a house party hosted by Connie Valk to raise awareness and funds for this non-profit. Listening and learning are Janet Clark-Hazlett, Karl Abbott, Nancy Gaede (at right) among others, including members of the Rochester community. Connie serves on the statewide board of R&MM and thinks highly of the work this organization is doing on behalf of the people who provide the food for all of our tables.

First Universalist Church member John “The Amazing Adams” Adams donated his talent as a magician to entertain RAIHN families while they stayed at our church in June. RAIHN, which stands for Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network, assists homeless families\* to achieve sustainable independence.

\* Marti Eggars obtained photo releases for the children in the photo.



# Finance

Ann Rhody for the Finance Team

Notes from your Finance Team

- The congregation passed the 2015-16 budget as proposed by the Board and Finance Team at the annual meeting. The budget maintains church programs and enhances the RE program, and includes the full fair share dues to our Unitarian Universalist affiliates. For a copy of the budget, please contact Ann Rhody or the church office.
- Our stewardship drive total is now at 91 pledges totaling just over \$180,000. Both the number of pledges and the pledge total are increases over previous years. Bravo!
- We have made great progress in our movement toward more socially responsible investing. In just over a year, we have reduced from 11% to about 2% of our portfolio invested in fossil fuels.
- We are in search of a treasurer! A well-organized person who is highly committed to the congregation would be the best fit. Side-by-side training and coaching will be provided on an ongoing basis. If you would like more information or would like to recommend someone, please contact Finance Chair Ann Rhody at [annrhody@yahoo.com](mailto:annrhody@yahoo.com).

Thank you for your support of this wonderful congregation! ♦

## Book Club News

Submitted by shirley Bond

**The book club will not be meeting July, or August.**

We will meet again **September 27<sup>th</sup>**.

We will be discussing: *Dreaming in Cuban* by Christina Garcia.

A remarkably funny yet endearing novel set in Cuba and Brooklyn.

A great read for this time in History. The book is short, lively, and informative.

For further information please contact Sarah Singal or Shirley Bond. ♦

# Make Some Beautiful Music!

Summer services are here! Come join us on Sundays at 10:00 AM to hear our great volunteer musicians as well as inspiring sermons by Summer Minister Peter House. Do you have musical skills to share, or just want to go out on a limb and try something? We have openings for musicians for summer services in August. Please contact summer music coordinator Ann Rhody ([annrhody@yahoo.com](mailto:annrhody@yahoo.com)) for more information or to volunteer. ♦

## Why March in Pride Parade July 18?

From the Social Justice Committee

We say we want to have visibility in the community. We say that we want our UU values known. Here is one way we make it happen.

March with us in the Pride Parade down Park Avenue and East Avenue toward the Martin Luther King Park next to our church, with other UUs behind our banner on July 18.

Please sign up on the Social Justice bulletin board in the Clara Barton Lounge with your contact information. Gathering time is noon, and the parade starts at 1:00 PM (earlier than other years), but more details -- including car pooling to the parade -- will be shared by those who sign up or email Connie Valk at [cvalk@frontiernet.net](mailto:cvalk@frontiernet.net)

We usually have twenty or more First Universalists participate. If you have never marched with the group before, come join us as UUs continue to take this stand for social justice. We’ve been heartened by the demonstration of thanks from the LGBTQ Community. Great strides have been made, but the struggle is not over. Transgender issues are the new frontier in NY State. This is one way we can make a stand for social justice.





# Auld Lang Syne

Submitted by Karen Dau, archivist



While I’m not generally very fond of this edifice, I never get tired of the gentle image of Jesus the Good Shepherd in what is known as the Sargent Window, located in the west alcove overlooking Clinton Avenue, especially when it is suffused in a blaze of afternoon sunlight. The Rose Window in the cupola, the windows in the balconies, and most of the other large ones in the rest of the building were removed along with this one from the previous Universalist church, located just two blocks away, and re-installed here. If these windows could talk, what would they have to tell us?

From the vantage point of their former home, many of them witnessed the transformation of the early Flour City, with its mills and grains, into the Flower City, with its hothouses and blossoms. They were neighbors of the Genesee River, with all the symbolism that water represents to a religious community. And most importantly to us, they saw preachers boldly proclaiming the radical, revolutionary, long-reviled message of Universalism, that God loved people too much to send anyone to hell. (Even today, far from the confines of our denomination, this old-time fundamentalist Universalism lives on and poses a viable counterpoint to restrictive theologies of today’s religious right.) What, then, have these windows known about during their occupancy of this building? Ah, so many stories and so little space!

This first big story took place in 1908, just weeks after completion of the church and only hours before an organ

recital by the English composer Edwin LeMare. That day one or more individuals who opposed the controversial innovations in the newly constructed organ broke into the sanctuary and wrecked nearly a hundred pipes, then carefully put them back in place before apparently escaping in a rush. But the last pipe was abandoned behind the console, and a supervisor who came to test the organ before the concert found it and was able to telegraph the builder in Elmira in time to complete repairs before LeMare’s performance.

During the hard years of the Depression there were uplifting Sunday afternoon and evening radio broadcasts that had originally been recorded in the sanctuary. In 1940 there was a music festival featuring the 60-voice church choir and Rochester native William Warfield, the black singer who was so renowned nationwide for his rendition of “Old Man River” during a time of pervasive racial segregation. There was many amateur theatrics in what is now the volunteer room of the church office when it used to be a stage area—complete with fireplace—that opened into what is now our Clara Barton lounge. In those days the church school classes met in that same room, separated from each other by moveable partitions while the children enjoyed—or endured—their Sunday School lessons of the time. And there used to be a gymnasium where there are now the second and third floors of the present religious education wing—but sadly, no pictures survive. Part 1 of 2. ❖



## Church Library to open two days in summer

Submitted by Philip Ebersole

The First Universalist Church library and bookstore will be open for browsing, borrowing and buying during coffee hour on July 19 and August 16.



# Drop-In Discussion, July Schedule

Submitted by David Damico

Summer Drop-in discussions are held each Sunday at 11:15 a.m. after the service 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.

5 | *Earliest Thoughts on UUism?*  
In this drop-in discussion, we will discuss our earliest thoughts of UUism? How did you see yourself fitting into this liberal religion at the time?  
Facilitated by David Damico.

12 | *Prayer*  
Verdis will share personal experiences and feelings on how prayer can be transformed and transformative.  
Facilitated by Verdis Robinson.

19 | *Micro-loan programs*  
The Pro Mex Group, founded by Bill Holliday, provides low-interest micro loans to groups of disadvantaged Mexicans, enabling them to start and maintain small businesses, thereby reducing the incentive to migrate to the U.S. Facilitated by Bill Holliday.

26 | *Carnism*  
Carnism, the opposite of Veganism, is the ideology that conditions people to eat certain animals. Viewing eating animals as a given, rather than a choice, let’s ask why eat animals at all. As UUs we think and talk a lot about isms - feminism, elitism, sexism, ageism, idealism, realism. But we don’t often include the two isms of carnism and speciesism. What is carnism and how deeply and subconsciously does it inform our choices every single day? Facilitated by Lois Baum and Lynne Westmorelan.

If you have a topic you’d like discussed or, better still, would like to do a presentation or lead a discussion, speak to David Damico. (He is working every other Sunday at the Genesee Country Village & Museum). ❖



# House News July 2015

Submitted by Tom Ruganis

**Thanks again to all who made the Spring Clean Up a success.**

Highlights of the building related activities.

- The exterior painting project suspended last fall will resume the week of June 29<sup>th</sup> and last about four weeks. There will be a lift stored in our parking lot for 2 of these weeks but otherwise should not disrupt parking or entrances.
- An easily removable safety barrier has been added to the Children’s Chapel on the fire escape window. This replaces the more permanent wooden bars on the window.
- One additional screen has been constructed for the Nursery and others will be created for the Nursery and Children’s Chapel.
- A contractor has been located to do the parking lot post repair and sealing. This would will be done after the exterior painting work.
- Installation of the Beryl Haas plaque has been completed. It is near the rear of the sanctuary on the south wall. Please take a minute to note the plaque and offer a moment of thanks.
- Permanent installation of the garden benches is now in the planning stage. The location has been determined and a method of anchoring is being investigated.
- The House Committee has been working with the communications committee on new signage. The results should start to be apparent soon.
- The House Committee is also working with Lifespan Faith Formation to spruce up the second and third floor classroom hallways. We will try to schedule the work early in the week to minimize the odors on Sundays. Check the weekly “This Week at First Universalist” for the schedule of planned work.

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 work on yourself, please let anyone on the House Committee know. The Committee is currently: Tom Ruganis, Chair (tom@ruganis.net), Sarah Singal, Mary Vyverberg, Karen Dau, Marcy Klein, and Mike VanArsdale and Ed Deller. We would love to hear from you! ❖