

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH

WEEKLY CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER

August 31-September 7, 2017



Worship Service This Weekend

Sunday, September 3, 2017 at 10:00am

First Unitarian Buddhist Fellowship, Leading

Rev. Tina Simson, Co-leading

Music provided by Zach Zwahlen

This week, our plate collection will help support [our church](#).

Gratitudes, Joys and Sorrows

A huge thank you to our church sextons, **Will Hayes** and **John Grego**, who worked hard this summer waxing and polishing many of our spaces including Williams Gallery, classrooms, Susan B. Anthony Lounge, hallways and the Sanctuary. This week they will finish up by waxing the Lobby. It's a labor intensive job, with simply beautiful results. Pass on your gratitude when you see them!

Thank you for your generosity! Two weekends a month our plate collections go to a community organization outside our church. On the other weekends the collection goes directly to support our church budget. This fiscal church year, we have already donated \$2,512 back to our greater community (excluding the Greater Good fund). On August 6, \$496.45 was collected for Gateways Music Festival. On August 13, \$503.75 was collected for our church. On August 20, \$357 was collected for UU Rochester People's Climate Coalition. On August 27, \$367 was collected for our church.

If you have a concern about a member of our congregation, please don't hesitate to contact Rev. Tina at 585-271-9070 x104.

Minister's Column by Rev. Joel Miller

In reading this week's newsletter, you'll read about the activities of our Black Lives Matter Task Force and the Social Justice programming around the book "Waking Up White." The author of the book, Debby Irving, will be speaking here at our church the evening of October 8. In advance of her speaking with us we will have a display, "Facing Racism," in Williams Gallery about the history of racism in Rochester and Monroe County.

First Unitarian has a proud history of working against racism. When the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. lead the civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, in March of 1965, 150 people were on the two buses that First Unitarian chartered to take people there. And in earlier generations our church had programs that served Rochester's Black youth.

Yet our justice-work against racism is not finished. New work will face us in our own Williams Gallery next week. I wrote a short quote for the "Facing Racism" promotional materials about this work:

"As a White Liberal, I thought that discarding racism would destroy it. Yet racism is as strong as ever, and the evidence is clear that us White folks are, despite our good intentions, still somehow racists. But neither shame nor willpower can overcome our racism. We will overcome racism by learning about it -- and by experiencing the real discomfort that education requires of us. That learning is worth it, and our integrity as human beings the reward for it."

We will experience "discomfort" doing this Justice Work -- the personal work around racism is very uncomfortable. But without it getting personal, we cannot overcome racism.

First Unitarian sent two busloads of people to march with Dr. King from Selma to Montgomery in 1965. Neither Dr. King nor our own folks from our church had to march alone. We had, and we have, companions for our journeys. It's when the work is hard and uncomfortable that we need each other. Keep connected in the

months to come. Have a look at the "Facing Racism" exhibit. And know that we are here to support one another, even when it is uncomfortable.

Coming Soon: "Soul Assembly" with Orange Sky!

Starting this September, we invite you to join Soul Assembly, a once-a-month, mostly lay-led, intergenerational night of worship centered on the arts. As with Saturday services of the past seven years, the heart of this monthly service will be rock & popular contemporary music by our house band Orange Sky. But wait, there's more! Soul Assembly will be released from the structure of a standard, sermon-centered order of service, allowing for a deeper, more innovative exploration of the contemporary arts. Watch for elements like video, readings, slam poetry, personal reflections and more, as we celebrate the wonderful creative strengths of our church community.

This idea emerged at just the right time, in many respects. First, Rev. Joel has pointed out that three weekly worship services are unsustainable with only two ministers, and he is excited that we'll be providing another opportunity for congregants to be involved in creating and leading worship. Also, Music Director Thom Snell is looking to diversify musical offerings on Sunday mornings, and this change will allow Orange Sky to play once a month at the 9:30am service on Sundays. This means beginning this fall there will not be a weekly Saturday service. While to some this might initially feel like a loss, we encourage our regular Saturday attendees to join us on this journey. We trust that you will come to view these changes as a clear net positive.

Join us for the kick-off of Soul Assembly, this new monthly celebration of music and arts, on **Saturday, September 16 at 7:00pm**. Our inaugural event will feature a guest appearance by members of Roc Bottom Slam, Rochester's award-winning slam poetry team, as well as performances by several of our youth members. Come ready to sing, dance and socialize!

Please watch for announcements regarding the timing of Soul Assembly, and Orange Sky participation in Sunday 9:30am services. By December, the schedule for Soul Assembly will regulate to 7:00pm on the second Saturday of each month, with Orange Sky leading music on the fourth Sunday of the month at the 9:30am service.

Happening This Week

Facing Racism

The newest exhibit in our Williams Gallery explores racism through historical photos of black people's experience in Rochester (courtesy of Monroe County's archives) and through the Take it Down exhibit from Rochester Museum and Science Center. Take it Down explains the controversial pickaninny-style farm scene panel that was once part of the Dentzel Carousel at Ontario Beach Park. Come to the opening reception **Friday, September 8, 6:00-8:00pm**. The exhibit, coordinated by our Social Justice Council, closes October 23.

Meditation Classes Begin Soon

Meditation classes with Jan Cook begin next week. *"Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space lies your freedom and power to choose your response. In those responses lie your growth and your happiness."* Quote attributed to Victor Frankl. Come explore that space, the sacred pause, in fellowship with others committed to transforming our world from the inside out. Beginning Meditation is on Wednesdays at noon, Deepening Meditation is Wednesdays at 1:30pm, and Ongoing Meditation is on Thursday evenings at 6:45pm. For more information and to register, contact Jan and Carolyn at livingandworking.info@gmail.com.

Homecoming Sunday

This is our last weekend of one service on Sundays. Homecoming is **Sunday, September 10** with services at **9:30am and 11:15am**. These intergenerational services will welcome us all back to church, and celebrate our collective journeys of the summer.

View a complete event listing in our online events calendar on our website at rochesterunitarian.org/.

Calls to Action

UU/Schools Partnership

We have a great opportunity for a few volunteers to teach 4th grade science once or twice a week at School #22. Lessons would be during Extended Learning Time from about 9:00-10:00am. Equipment and lesson plans are available. Make a difference, please. Contact Joe Simson at jsimson@rochester.rr.com.

Help Wanted

Cafe Veritas is seeking a Sound Technician for their monthly cafe series. It's preferred that person be available for all eight shows, but not required. If interested, please contact Jackie Lange at events@cafeveritas.org.

Register Now for Religious Education!

Please be sure your children or grandchildren are registered for Religious Education (6 months through 18yrs). For more information or to register, contact Sheila Schuh at sheilas@rochesterunitarian.org.

Food Needs Continue: Baby food or supplies, soup or canned fruit or vegetables, paper goods like tissues would all be welcome. We will deliver whatever shows up in the basket at church next week to the Brighton Food Cupboard. For more information, contact Alison Wilder at 585-342-2459 or awilder@frontiernet.net.

Pledge Payment Options

You have options in the way your pledge payments are processed. Some choose to send a check directly to the church. Another good alternative is automatic ACH contributions from your checking account. They are the easiest way for our Church Office to receive pledge contributions. They are easy to set up and save us credit card fees. Your monthly contributions would come out of your account on the 15th of each month. Contact Al Gundlach at 585-271-9070 x103 if you are interested.

Does your group meet at church? Be sure to reserve a room in advance! Email the Church Office at office@rochesterunitarian.org with the details.

Other News and Reminders

Update from Roof Communication Team: After many rain delays, we have good news regarding the roof replacement project. The project has begun with the delivery of materials and equipment; last week the contractor began staging everything in the south parking lot next to the kitchen. **Until further notice, the south parking lot is unavailable for church use during the construction project.** The latest projection for completion of the project is November. The roof communication team will keep the congregation informed on the project progress.

We are delighted to share that **Shannan Foos** will join the First Unitarian staff as membership coordinator. Shannan held the position as interim in the spring of 2016, and is eager to bring her ideas and welcoming presence to this vital position. Please say congratulations next time you see her. We are lucky to have her skill, dedication to UU, and her enthusiasm.

Currents discussion group resumes **Wednesday, September 13, at 12:15pm**. The topic will be "What Will a Post-Trump USA Look Like?" Readings related to our topic will be sent to those on our mailing list. If you would like to be added to the list, please contact Dave McLaughlin at davebcctf@hotmail.com.

Aging Gratefully is a group open to anyone aged 60 and above, which meets monthly to discuss a topic chosen by the group. The group next meets on **Thursday, September 14, 1:30-3:00pm** in the Susan B. Anthony Lounge to discuss "Our Parents." Bring pictures or other mementos if you wish.

Racial Justice Presentations

In association with the "Facing Racism" exhibit in the Williams Gallery, the Rochester community's Take it Down Planning Committee has scheduled three opportunities to view the exhibit, hear about racism today, and learn about actions people can take locally to work toward racial justice. The roughly identical sessions will

each be held at our church on **Thursdays, September 14, 7:00-9:00pm; September 28, 7:00-9:00pm; and October 19, 7:00-9:00pm.**

Waking Up White

Our Social Justice Council is bringing to town Debby Irving, author of the 2014 award-winning book *Waking Up White*, to speak about her journey away from racial ignorance, confusion, and frustration and toward empowerment and action. Come hear her on **Sunday, October 8 at 7:00pm** at our church. Donations are encouraged to cover expenses and to support our social justice initiatives.

Co-creating the Next Generation of Congregations

How might we find ways to offer the love and grace of Unitarian Universalism to a world that needs us? Rev. Renee Ruchotzke is keynote speaker at the upcoming leadership conference and workshop “Leadership as a Team Sport” on **Saturday, October 14, 1:00-5:00pm**, at the UU Church of Buffalo (695 Elmwood Ave. Buffalo NY 14222). Please register (<https://uua.wufoo.com/forms/k189inbl1wo40go/>) by **October 13**. This is a free event and all are welcome.