

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH

WEEKLY CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER

October 12-October 19, 2017



Worship Service This Weekend

Sunday, October 15, 2017
Services at 9:30am and 11:15am

"Flying Together"

Rev. Vail Weller, preaching
Rev. Tina Simson, co-leading

Our plate collection will help support Big Brother Big Sister of Rochester

Sunday's Sermon

Flying Together

The Rev. Vail Weller

What inspires the starling to move in harmony with the other birds in the group? How does your living generously lead to increased generosity in others? How might abundance transform your community?

The Rev. Vail Weller is Congregational Giving Director at the Unitarian Universalist Association, which means she manages the Annual Program Fund that encourages congregations to support other congregations through covenantal giving to the Association. Vail loves visiting congregations across our movement, and has seen a lot of them as a lifelong UU as well as a parish minister. She has served in West Virginia, Michigan, and most recently San Mateo, California, where she still resides. She shares her life with her children, Zinn and Denison, her husband David, and her dog Macy.

Gratitudes, Joys and Sorrows

The memorial for **Jim Goff**, husband of **Brian Hurlburt**, will be held at our church on **Saturday, October 21, at 1:00pm**. We continue to hold Brian and Jim's sisters, Janice and Wendy, in our hearts.

Please hold the family of our member **Peter Cardegna** in your thoughts and prayers. Peter died from a short but serious illness. His Celebration of Life will be held at the First Universalist Church on Clinton Avenue on **Saturday, October 21, at 2:00pm**. Rev Joel Miller and Rev. Michelle George-Yates will officiate. Peter and his children belonged to First Universalist when the children were growing up. *"To live in hearts that love is not to die."* If you have a concern about a member of our congregation, please don't hesitate to contact Rev. Tina at 585-271-9070 x104.

Update from Reference Team Regarding Brubaker Recommendations

The members of the reference team that worked with Dr. David Brubaker during the 2015-16 church year were Bill Fugate, Ajamu Kitwana, Suzanne Farrell, Andy Poremba, David Friedman, Glenn Cook, and Chris Graziano. We are pleased to offer this update on the primary recommendations that came out of our work together:

Celebrating What is Good: There is much "Good" going on at our church. We sense a more buoyant and optimistic attitude among congregants and less angst or stress in general conversation. We seem like a happier lot. We are also very pleased to see a lot of newcomers of all ages in attendance. Perhaps our new website deserves some of the credit for that. There also seems to be a resurgence of volunteer groups, which translates to a feeling of ownership and a sense of pride in our church. The Board of Trustees, staff, and membership are all benefiting from more open communication which makes us believe we are heading in the right direction. The condition and appearance of the building has also improved, especially with major capital project of the roof replacement that began in early September. Significant maintenance is also being done on

the main entry doors to the church, to several of the doors of the Sanctuary, and the parking lot has been re-surfaced.

Revisiting the Governance Model: We have started our work to educate the congregation with a presentation by John Solberg to the Board and membership on how policy governance is structured and designed to be executed. The Board's work last year included regular discussion of our governance policies and responsibilities of the Board and Senior Minister. There is a lot more anticipated during this new church year, especially with the Board's focus on monitoring outcomes of the church's operations.

Restructuring the Senior Minister's Role: The Interim Senior Minister, Rev. Joel Miller, is very adept in working within policy governance as it is intended to operate. His work with the Board of Trustees will inform the role of our future called senior minister.

Enhancing Two-way Communication: Our church has seen marked improvements in both the methods and philosophy of communication among the Board, staff, and congregation. We have upgraded our church website, established Worship and Personnel Teams, and developed a Staff Covenant, among other accomplishments. The continued incorporation of openness and respect throughout our relationships and endeavors – including the implementation of the other Reference Team recommendations – may supersede the need for a dedicated Communication Team.

Engaging Conflict Well: The recommendation that the Healthy Congregations Team incorporate the functions of the proposed Conflict Resolution Team is one of Rev. Joel's priorities and is in the works for the current church year. Work on the new covenant will follow this year's work on establishing good relational patterns in the congregation and beginning the work of leading the congregation into effective conflict management. Per Rev Joel, "conflict is inevitable, but damaging conflict is not."

Fostering Intergroup Connections: As recommended, the Worship Committee is considering how best to have services that are more inclusive of all ages. The decision to change the Saturday service schedule to once per month was driven by finances and availability of our house band Orange Sky. Nancy Brush is coordinating potluck dinners in members' homes. As people sign up for those, an effort can be made to include various generations. We need to have people from our congregation volunteer to organize an all church picnic to celebrate the end of the church year. Staff does not have time to do this.

Dealing with Grief and Loss: The recommendations included creating a team to help congregation through healing process and have this in place as an ongoing option approximately once a year. Rev. Tina Simpson put together a team to offer listening/healing sessions for the congregation to engage in the healing process. According to Rev. Tina, 16 sessions in total were offered between October and May. There were sessions facilitated for staff and Board of Trustees members as well. Three sessions were offered to UU Church of Canandaigua. A relatively small number of individuals took advantage of this resource. There were 84 total participants from our church. Those that did participate reported they found it helpful. We need to determine whether and how to continue to offer similar opportunities.

Sustaining our Church's Financial Future: This was a year for shoring up the financial stability of the church. Much progress was achieved for several reasons. A large factor was that we did move more fully into Policy Governance so that our Interim Senior Minister took charge of budgeting and financial projections, and meets with the treasurer regularly. Canvas expectations were aligned with factual information of membership, not on hopes and dreams. We have a Financial Advisory Committee-Board of Trustees (FAC-BOT) team advising the Board on finances, as input is requested. We emerged from the last fiscal year with a sound understanding of our true membership and pledging level. Decisions about programing are being informed by our available budget. The Board of Trustees is more involved.

Happening This Week

Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) Rochester invites you to *Bethlehem Beyond the Wall*, a century of photography, video and art from the Museum of the Palestinian People, on view from **October 1 through October 14**. The exhibition was made possible by a generous grant from the Josephine and Paul Wenger

Fund for Peace through International Understanding of the First Unitarian Church of Rochester, and support from JVP Rochester. This remarkable exhibition will begin its national tour at the Lorette Wilmot Library Lobby, Nazareth College (4245 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14618).

Literature and Visual Arts (LAVA): All are welcome to a discussion of *Beyond Words: What Animals Think and Feel* by Carl Safina on **Friday, October 13, 7:00pm** in the Susan B. Anthony Lounge. This lively account by a respected scientist describes the surprisingly complex communities of elephants, wolves and orcas, and what that tells us about their thoughts and feelings. For more information: www.frontiernet.net/~wrfugate/lava/.

Café Veritas: Lucy Kaplansky performs at Café Veritas on **Saturday, October 14, at 7:30pm**. For more information or for tickets, go to www.cafeveritas.org.

Please enjoy some hearty soup (suggested donation \$3 for social action cause) made by our Spiritual Survivor Junior Youth after services this Sunday.

UU101: Introduction to Unitarian Universalism and First Unitarian Church. If you're new to our church, please join us after either service this **Sunday, October 15**, for UU101, a 45-minute class, which offers an introduction to Unitarian Universalism, UU history, and ways to get connected here at our church. No need for prior registration, just join us after the service at the literature rack. Children are welcome! For more information, contact Shannan Foos at membership@rochesterunitarian.org or 585-271-9070 x108.

This Sunday, after both services, Jenna Bernardi will offer brief Tarot readings in the Williams Gallery in exchange for a donation to the Grace Fund.

There will be a Ukulele Jam this Sunday, October 15, 1:00-3:00pm. Bring your uke to the Youth Room (basement) for an informal session of music making. Contact Dave Teegarden at beakertee@aol.com for more information.

The Environmental Task Force, in collaboration with Pachamama Alliance, will present "An Introduction to Project Drawdown" on **Sunday, October 15 at 6:30pm**. A short video will be followed by a discussion of the book *Drawdown*, edited by Paul Hawken. This describes the work of a large team of scientists worldwide to identify, research, and model the 100 most substantive, existing solutions to address climate change. What was uncovered is a path forward that can roll back global warming within thirty years, and some of the top solutions will surprise you.

Calls to Action

Call for Gilbert Spirit Fund Proposals: Updated information about the Gilbert Spirit Fund and the new application form have been posted on our church website, www.rochesterunitarian.org. Proposals are due by February 1, 2018, either in hard copy to the church or by email as noted on the application form. Contact the selection committee chair, Jane Tuttle, at janetuttle@bluefrog.com with any questions.

Gratitude for Continued Donations: The food collection cart was full again last weekend even though there are competing requests for hurricane relief. Thanks to all who remember our needy neighbors close by as well as those afar. Powdered or canned milk, juice or canned fruit, soups, toothpaste or diapers, the Food Cupboard provides them all. For questions, contact Alison Wilder at awilder@frontiernet.net or 585-342-2459.

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.

Other News and Reminders

Roof construction is underway! Until further notice, the south parking lot is unavailable for church use. Also note that the back door is to be used as an emergency exit only.

Kahn's Corner today continues the quote from Wendy Lesner's newly published book *You Say to Brick – The Life of Louis Kahn*. "Suspended a good six feet off the high concrete walls and seemingly held in place only by thin beams and brackets, this remarkable ceiling seemed to float rather than loom, and the whole glorious effect was enhanced by the natural light pouring in from the four corners of the room, where the high set clerestory windows, located in four tall light towers, let in the sunlight in a way that was mysterious because not fully visible." To be continued in the next Kahn's Corner.

FUUn Bunch: Each month, the FUUn Bunch meets for drinks and eats and good conversation. Mark your calendars for **Friday, October 27, 7:00pm** at Gigi's Italian Restaurant. RSVP Phil Hildreth at philhildreth@comcast.net. Please indicate who and how many, and he will reply with directions.

The First Wednesday Book Group will meet on **Wednesday, November 1 at 11:15am** in the Susan B. Anthony Lounge to discuss *Nobody's Fool* by Richard Russo. This slyly funny, moving novel is about a blue-collar town in Upstate NY (Bath), a classic American story of a triumphantly unlucky citizen. **Please note the time change to 11:15am** (to avoid parking congestion). Join us if this book interests you. Looking ahead to December 6, the book selection will be *Bellevue: Three Centuries of Medicine and Mayhem at America's Most Storied Hospital* by David Oshinsky. Contact Joyce Henzel at joycehenzel@gmail.com for questions.

Have you attended UU101 and are ready to find your place at our church? Please join us for Starting Point – a 4-hour Saturday class which offers an opportunity to explore ways in which Unitarian Universalism can make a difference in your life and help you connect with others. Starting Point will be offered on **Saturday, November 4, from 9:00am to 2:00pm** in the Susan B. Anthony Lounge. Please register in advance by emailing Shannan Foos, Membership Coordinator, at membership@rochesterunitarian.org.

Join in the 55th Anniversary Celebration of our building on Friday, November 10, at 7:00pm in the Williams Gallery, and for a conversation with our architect Louis Kahn, portrayed by Lew Ward-Baker. Marlin Potter, a project manager who worked with Louis Kahn, will share his memories. The celebration will be followed by cake and beverages. Extra cake will be offered to anyone wearing something from the late 50's or early 60's. This event is sponsored by the Kahn Building Appreciation Committee. For questions, email Nancy Koch at nkoch@rochester.rr.com.