

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH
WEEKLY CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER

January 18-January 25, 2018



Upcoming Worship Services

Sunday, January 21, 2018 at 9:30am & 11:15am

"This Dangerous Congregation: First Unitarian's First 193 Years"

Rev. Joel Miller, preaching

Suzy Farrell, worship associate

Our plate collection will help support [Flower City Habitat Women Build.](#)

Charting the Course for Our Road Ahead



It is a key tenet of Unitarian Universalism that our churches are not defined by a creed, nor a church hierarchy, nor by a minister – but by congregants in covenant with each other. We decide who we are as a faith community. As we, the members of First Unitarian Church of Rochester, move forward in our transition and begin searching for a new minister, we each have a vital role to play in helping to chart our course as we embark on Our Road Ahead – together. During February and March of this year we will gather in small groups to share our stories about First Unitarian and wishes for its future, deepening our connections to each other and building a shared vision of the community we hope to be. In these important gatherings each congregant will have the opportunity to help clarify the core values, mission and goals of First Unitarian.

Following the completion of these sessions, your Board of Trustees will use the results from all the group sessions to document our core values, clarify our mission and shape what are called 'Congregational Ends' or simply 'Ends.' These Ends identify the results we want to create in the future and provide the basis for everything we do together as a congregation, becoming an integral set of policies in our Policy Governance structure. During April the Board will work from the input provided by the congregation to produce a draft revision to our Values, Mission and Ends to be finalized in May. Throughout we will be guided by Laura Park of Unity Consulting, who has successfully led many UU congregations through this process of discernment. This work will also provide critical input to the Search Committee, providing to potential candidates a sense of who we are and who we wish to be in our work together, in our city and in the world.

Our hope is that every congregant will take part in this process. Whether you have only recently joined, have been a member for many years or are a friend of the church – we want to hear your voices. The power of this process will be determined by how well it represents the diversity of our community.

To participate in this deeply rewarding experience, please sign up to help map Our Road Ahead! Board members will be available with signup sheets and to answer your questions between services in January. You can also register online at <http://rochesterunitarian.org/our-road-ahead/>. Small group sessions have been scheduled during the day, in the evening, and on weekends to help enable everyone to participate. In addition, food, beverages, and child care will be provided.

We look forward to charting our course for the road ahead – with you.

Gratitudes, Joys and Sorrows

The Brighton Food Cupboard says thank you to our church for its support in 2017 and generous donation of food totaling 2000 pounds, allowing it to serve at least 400 people with food insecurity per month. Let's keep it up! For questions or more information, contact Alison Wilder at awilder@frontiernet.net or 585-342-2459.

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

Happening This Week

News from the Nominating Committee: The time is drawing near! The deadline to make recommendations for Search Team members is **Sunday, January 21**. Consider and submit up to three names of members who are best described as team oriented, trustworthy, able to think about the "big picture," and have the diverse interests of the entire congregation at heart. Stop by the Nominating Committee table after services, or email your recommendation to nominating@rochesterunitarian.org.

A New Soul Matters Group for People of Color is starting on Thursday, February 15, 6:00-8:00pm. This Soul Matters group is a new pilot program open to adult church members and friends who identify as people of color. It will meet once a month to reflect on the worship theme from the members' heart centered and unique perspective. Participants will be asked to assess their experience as group participants, and offer feedback on the process and the material to the facilitators, and to the Minister of Spiritual Development. This group follows the same covenant and format as other Soul Matters groups. A maximum of 10 people can participate. If you are interested in joining or would like more information, contact Ahlia Kitwana at ahlia.kitwana@gmail.com or Barb DeLeeuw at bdeleeuw@rochester.rr.com.

Spiritual Direction is now offered here at our church. What is Spiritual direction? Spiritual direction is a time honored way to help another person deepen their spiritual life through exploration of life's profound questions such as Who am I? Why am I here? How can I nurture a connection with that which is larger, more mysterious, and beyond myself? How can I bring my life into alignment with my spiritual values? Spiritual direction is a kind of "personal training for the soul" that responds to a universal yearning for understanding our relationship with the holy. In the community of our church, spiritual direction is valued as one way of helping congregants in their individual spiritual formation. Spiritual direction involves two people: a spiritual director and a seeker who is looking for a guide along the way. They meet, usually once a month, to plunge into whatever spiritual questions arise for the seeker. The spiritual director's role is to listen, to question, to hold with compassion, and to offer guidance. Spiritual direction is *not* for people who would be better supported in a psychotherapy setting, or people in crisis, such as a loss or a difficult health situation, who might benefit from pastoral care. Spiritual direction is offered by experienced, trained spiritual directors who are guided by their training, their code of ethics, and their own sense of compassion and mystery. Spiritual directors typically charge an hourly fee from \$40 to \$80, and fees are often negotiable. Our church has several spiritual directors who are available to offer their expertise. For more information about spiritual direction, call Joy Collins at 585-749-0695 or email to joy@revjoycollins.com, or call Libby Moore at 585-315-7015 or email to libbymoore81@gmail.com.

Our next exhibit in the Williams Gallery features paintings by Casey Cardillo, a teacher in the Creative Workshop at the Memorial Art Gallery. Please join us for the opening reception on **Friday, January 19, 6:00-8:00pm**. An advocate for animals and lover of nature, Ms. Cardillo uses color and form to explore and express her appreciation for the beauty of life, nature, and imagination. This exhibit runs from Thursday, January 18 to Monday, February 26.

UU101: Introduction to Unitarian Universalism and Our Church: If you are new to our church, please join us **after either service this Sunday, January 21**, 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.

This Sunday, January 21, after both services, Jenna Bernardi will offer brief **Tarot readings** in exchange for a donation to the Grace Fund. Sign up that day at her table in the Williams Gallery for your appointment.

From the Gilbert Spirit Fund Selection Committee: This is a last call for proposals, due by **Thursday, February 1**. For details, go to <http://rochesterunitarian.org/gilbert-spirit-fund/>.

Please consider joining the Gilbert Spirit Fund Selection committee. We need people to start in the coming fall. Meetings are minimal and most of the work is done in February and early March (reviewing proposals then meeting to make recommendations). Contact janetuttle@bluefrog.com if interested.

Our Social Justice Ministry is co-sponsoring a program entitled **Roe v. Wade 45th Anniversary: Protecting Our Reproductive Rights**, on **Monday, January 22, 7:00-8:30pm**. A four-person panel will outline the actions we need to take to protect access to safe, reliable and affordable birth control and abortion. Panelists will include Iman Abid, Director, Genesee Valley Chapter of New York Civil Liberties Union; Lauren Deutsch, Esq., Executive Director, Healthy Baby Network; Rachael Phelps, M.D., Medical Director of Planned Parenthood of Central and Western New York; and Robin Wilt, Brighton Town Board and business owner. Jaclyn Richard, President of Rochester National Organization of Women (N.O.W.), will be the moderator. This event is co-sponsored by Planned Parenthood of Central & Western New York and the Rochester Chapter of N.O.W.

Calls to Action and Other News

Facebook Update Could Hide our Posts: Facebook is making a change that makes it less likely you'll see our church posts unless you take action to set the church as a priority in your Facebook News Feed preferences. Whenever you like, comment, and share, you help others to see our posts. We don't want you - or any of our 1,615 page likers, and our 1,540 followers — to miss out. For assistance setting priorities in your Facebook News Feed, go to the help section of Facebook.

Request(s) for Fundraising Event: As you know, our Congregation is very involved in fundraising efforts associated with our various ministries and initiatives. In 2018, to better manage the many requests we receive to use our Church facility for fundraising events, we will be adopting a new process. To request space, please complete the Approval Request for Fundraising Event form, and submit it to Kim Joy in the Church Office. Hard copies of the form are available in the Workroom, and/or an electronic version can be sent to you, via email request to office@rochesterunitarian.org. We look forward to continuing to support our proud tradition of funding our ministries and initiatives in the coming year.

The **FUUN Bunch** will meet again at Gigi's Italian Kitchen (2256 Hudson Ave, Rochester, NY 14617) on **Friday, January 26, 6:30pm**. Please RSVP to Phil Hildreth at 415-606-5802 or philhildreth@comcast.net.

Wednesday Morning Book Club next meets on **Wednesday, February 7, at 11:15am**. This month's selection is the Pulitzer Prize winning novel *The Known World* by Edward P. Jones. Set in antebellum Virginia, the novel examines ownership of slaves by both white and black Americans. All are welcome. For questions, contact Joyce Henzel at joycehenzel@gmail.com. The reading for the **Wednesday, March 7** meeting is *Tribe* by Sebastian Junger. This book explains why we are stronger when we come together, and how that can be achieved even in today's divided world. All interested are welcome to attend. For questions, contact John Swartz at johnswartz@yahoo.com.

A Green Tip from the Environmental Task Force: You, Too, Can Compost

From *Drawdown – The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*, edited by Paul Hawken: "Like all living beings, humans create waste, but that waste can be uniquely problematic. Nearly half of the solid waste produced around the world is organic or biodegradable. A key contributor to that rubbish flow

is food waste, as well as litter from yards and parks. Today, much of this waste ends up in landfills. It decays in the absence of oxygen, producing the potent greenhouse gas methane, which is thirty-four times more powerful than carbon dioxide over one hundred years. While many landfills have some form of methane management, it is far more effective to divert organic waste for composting. In 2015, an estimated 38 percent of food waste was composted in the United States; 57 percent was composted in the European Union. If all lower-income countries reached the U.S. rate and all higher-income countries achieved the E.U. rate, composting could avoid methane emissions from landfills equivalent to 2.3 gigatons of carbon dioxide by 2050.” To do your part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, compost your food waste. Reduce. Reuse. Repurpose. Recycle.

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.

Come learn about **Finger Lakes Climate Fund** on **Sunday, February 11, at 2:00pm**, from speaker Gay Nicholson, PhD and President of Sustainable Tompkins. Sustainable Tompkins, based in Ithaca, has a program of providing tax deductible carbon offsets that drive real, local, carbon-foot-print reductions that would not otherwise be possible in low to moderate income households in the Finger Lakes region. Join us to find out how we can be part of the Finger Lakes Climate Fund with a Monroe County team that helps households in our community. This talk is free, and co-sponsored by Rochester People’s Climate Coalition and our church’s Environmental Task Force.

Susan B. Anthony Birthday Luncheon: Elaine Weiss, a journalist and author, will be the keynote speaker for this year's luncheon at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center on **Wednesday, February 14, 12:00-1:30pm**. Her second book, *The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote* will be published by Viking in March. She has spoken at Chautauqua, written for The Atlantic, Harper's and other publications, and produced documentaries for National Public Radio. Susan B. Anthony was a longtime member of our congregation and First Unitarian will have our own tables at the luncheon. This is the major fundraising event for the Susan B. Anthony Museum & House. Tickets are \$75. We need to secure paid reservations soon. We offer carpooling from our church. For reservations or more information, call Sally Whitbeck at 585-461-3150.