

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH
WEEKLY CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER

September 21-28, 2017



Worship Service This Weekend

Sunday, September 24, 2017
Intergenerational Services at 9:30am and 11:15am
Rev. Joel Miller, preaching
"Into Our Arms"
Rev. Tina Simson, co-leading
Our plate collection will help support [Foodlink Backpack Program](#).

Minister's Column

I'm writing this week about our church's interim work this fall. But I can't get to that work without thinking about how difficult these times are. Mexico's severe earthquake. Yet another terrible hurricane that is devastating Puerto Rico as I write. Terrible famine in Yemen. Wars against Muslims in Burma and against democracy in Syria. And the U.S. president is a catastrophe for our country and for the world.

These are difficult times. We come to church to survive difficult times and help others do the same. But we also come to church to keep our attention on a healthy future for all. The world needs First Unitarian's ministries.

And that's why you and I are doing this interim work together. Even as First Unitarian continues to do its vital ministries, you and I are also preparing our church for a rapidly changing, difficult world.

Right now your Board and I are working on the interim tasks that prepare our church for its ministries in these times. I am working with our church's staff to update procedures and practices and welcome new staff members. I am (finally!) bringing together a team of members that will lead our church's development of effective conflict skills -- a process called "Healthy Congregations." And I am working with the leadership of First Unitarian's Social Justice Council as we continue our church's initial steps toward being a multicultural spiritual community.

First Unitarian's Board is working on Policy Governance. The goals this year in developing our church's governance skills are that decisions made on behalf of the congregation be both transparent as well as represent the congregation's goals and values. The Board is also asking "powerful questions" as it does this work. The overarching question, recommended by consultant Laura Park, is: "How can we govern to liberate the energy and creativity of our church to awaken compassion, transform lives, and bless the world?"

These are big efforts, and accomplishing them will take an endurance past this interim time. But these will empower our church to adapt to the challenges of ministry in a rapidly changing and difficult world.

You are, as individuals and as a spiritual community, much needed for the difference you make.

I am grateful to come to church and be, for this short time, a part of your important ministries.

Rev. Joel

Gratitudes, Joys and Sorrows

We are grateful to Bob Taylor who worked hard weed whacking the outdoor Labyrinth (lower lawn, below the lower parking lot) which had become overgrown. It's looking great and is ready to be enjoyed!

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

BackPack Food Brunch

To help raise funds to support our BackPack Food program for this school year, we're offering a tasty, vegan brunch of coffee cake (gluten-free available), vegetable-rice-vinaigrette salad, fruit salad, and juice/coffee/tea after each service this **Sunday, September 24**. Consider fasting for the morning until brunch to be in touch with hunger and the lives of children this program supports at School #22. Our BackPack Food program provides a bag of healthy food each Friday to help students avoid the distress of hunger, so they're ready to learn on Mondays.

Bookstore Open This Sunday - Get Your Copy of *Waking Up White*

Your church bookstore will be open this **Sunday, September 24 from 9:00am to 1:00pm**. We still have several copies of Debby Irving's *Waking Up White*, and *Finding Myself in the Story of Race* for sale for a discounted price of \$16 a copy. And don't forget that Debby will be speaking at our church on October 8, so get a copy now in advance of her engagement. Other in-stock titles relevant to the race issue are *White Trash* by Nancy Isenberg and *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the U.S.* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz. All titles are at least a 20% discount off list price. And there is never any waiting for a book to be delivered; you can take it home with you and start enjoying it right away! So stop in before or after services, chat with the volunteers and other congregants, and browse our offerings. You will always find something you will enjoy reading. We gladly accept cash and checks.

Free! Our Church's Play *An Equal Right to Act* at Rochester's Public Market

FirstLight Players Illuminating Theatre is going to another venue this Friday, **September 22, 8:00pm** at the Rochester Public Market (280 North Union Street). Come along and bring friends to our church's play: *An Equal Right to Act*. This 18 member cast takes us back in time when our congregation welcomed an action filled convention to halt injustices of 1848. Our citizens were ignited by the famous Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention where the spark for the American movement began. Welcome to our church's reenactment of *Radical Hospitality!* Our play is part of The City of Rochester Public Market film series called *Flicks on The Bricks: Justice Night* with a film about Frederick Douglass as part of the doubleheader. Gold T-shirts from Standing on the Side of Love are welcome attire.

First Muse Chamber Music this Sunday at 7:30!

Join us for the opening concert of First Muse this **Sunday, September 24 at 7:30 pm**. *Joys and Litanies: A Local Perspective* features inspiring works by Rochester-area composers Cary Ratcliff, David Liptak, and James Willey. Join us to experience the immediacy of this music as performed by Rebecca Gilbert, William Amsel, Cary Ratcliff, David Bruestle, and the Amenda Quartet. Twenty-five percent of ticket revenue will be donated to our Honduras Task Force. Tickets for this concert (\$15 general) and for the season (\$40 general) will be on sale at the concert and after both services, Sunday, September 24. More information is available at www.FirstMuse.org.

Labyrinth Quest Returns!

Friends of Labyrinth Quest, we invite you to join us for two labyrinth walks at our church. The first will be on **Monday, September 25, 7:00–9:00pm**, and the second will be on **Thursday, November 9, 7:00-9:00pm**. Our many partners – local energy healers, Sage-Thyme, Sonam Targee, and Christina Ivanna, and the Onondaga School of Therapeutic Massage – will be with us. As always, everyone is welcome. And as before, the program is free but we appreciate donations – your generosity has supported our labyrinth program for many years. We look forward to seeing you! For more information, contact Harriette Royer at 585-436-9174 or walk@labyrinthquest.org.

Racial Justice Presentations

In association with the "Facing Racism" exhibit in the Williams Gallery, the Rochester community's Take it Down Planning Committee has two remaining 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 **Thursday, September 28, 7:00-9:00pm**, and **Thursday, October 19, 7:00-9:00pm**.

Calls to Action

Next Meeting of the Black Lives Matter/Youth Lives Matter Task Force

The BLM/YLM Task Force will meet on **Sunday, September 24, 12:30pm**, in Room 110. Focus will be on planning action items for this year's projects: Police Accountability; Raise the Age; and Child Care Assistance Funding. Simeon Banister, representative of the Rochester Area Community Foundation, the group that helped us fund Debby Irving's upcoming visit, will be joining us. He is an eloquent speaker who is highly informed about numerous groups working on similar projects. He is working on facilitating interconnection between these groups. All are welcome to attend.

RAIHN Volunteers Needed!

Our RAIHN (Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network) families in transition will be with us in just two weeks (October 8 - 15). Thanks to the many people who have already volunteered to support this important Social Justice program. We still need a few volunteers to fill the schedule. If you can devote two or three hours at some time during the week, please visit our schedule at [SignUp.com](http://signup.com/go/CEeifVG) and add your name to the list: <http://signup.com/go/CEeifVG>. Particular needs are evening and overnight hosts, as well as slots on the weekends. Please contact Dave Teegarden at raihnfirstunitarian@gmail.com or 585-733-9450 with any questions.

Social Justice Council Benefits Boutique

Are you a crafter of wood, fabric, pottery, jewelry, yarn, photos, paint, soaps, recycled items? Do you sell handmade items or earth friendly green products? Does your group sell a product that promotes social responsibility? We would love to have you join us! We're having our annual Social Justice Council Benefits Boutique, accompanied by a Cafe of home-baked goods and soups, and a new Gift Making room for Youth on **Saturday, November 11 and Sunday, November 12**. We are looking for new crafters to sell their wares. Please consider joining our vendor team. For information, contact Jenny Cos at jennycos717@gmail.com or Andrea Porter at porter.aa@gmail.com.

Checks for Brighton Food Cupboard?

Some people have expressed a preference to giving money instead of actual food. You may put a check addressed to Brighton Food Cupboard in a marked envelope in the weekend service collection basket or the safe in the Workroom, and Al Gundlach, our church's Finance Director, will forward it to the cupboard. Thanks, Al, for offering this service. 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, so 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.

First Wednesday Morning Book Discussion Group will discuss the book *Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race* by Debby Irving on **Wednesday, October 4, 11:00am-12:30pm**. The author shares her struggle to understand racism and offers a fresh perspective on bias, stereotypes, manners, and tolerance. This discussion is the perfect springboard to Ms. Irving's appearance at our church on Sunday, October 8. All are welcome on a drop-in basis. For further information, contact Joyce Henzel at joycehenzel@gmail.com.

UU's Reading Non-Fiction

We are kicking off the new season with an uncommon story of two men raised in the same neighborhood with the same name and similar backgrounds, and what ultimately becomes of them. We'll discuss the book *Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates* by prize-winning author Wes Moore on **Wednesday, October 11, 7:00-8:30pm**. Drop-ins are welcome to join in our discussion. If you have questions, please contact Audrey Perry at auperry066@gmail.com or 585-244-4013.

Aging Gratefully is an open-ended discussion group open to anyone aged 60 and above which meets on the second Thursday of every month from 1:30-3:00pm in the Susan B. Anthony Lounge to discuss a topic related to aging. The next meeting is on **Thursday, October 12** and the topic is "Ourselves as Parents."

A Green Tip from Your Environmental Climate Task Force

Allow nature to do your lawn and garden a favor as winter approaches. Leaves left on the ground enhance microbial activity, suppress weeds, fertilize and shield the ground. Ideally, leave the leaves intact on up to three to four inches on areas without grass, below trees, on gardens and mulched areas. Using a mower, mulching or otherwise, chop the leaves down to dime-sized pieces to cover grassed areas. This covering should be about half an inch or less thick with about half an inch of grass peeking out. (Caution: deeper leaf cover can damage the lawn.) This will lead to a healthier, more vibrant lawn in the spring. This is nature's mulch. And these small leaf particles can also be added to the compost pile or used to start a new one, which will turn into rich soil to be used as mulch in the spring. Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle.