

Dear Ones,

This church year has begun as strangely as last year's closed. And it has been just as, if not more so, full of moments of little magic and the forging of powerful connections.

Our commitment to the very best scientific advice and care for those who are most at-risk for COVID complications continues, and our default for this church year is gathering online. If you haven't yet gotten on Zoom, connect with us and let us help you connect with others. Whether it's training or helping you get set up with the right device and internet connection, we can help. If you haven't been to church in awhile, come on back. We miss seeing your face! We continue to meet on Sunday mornings at 9:30 AM for our children's service and at 10:00 AM by Zoom and phone, and each week I'm delighted and grateful to see hundreds of you staring back at me and the rest of the worship team, greeting each other in the chat and staying after the service to connect in smaller groups and really get to know people. The newsletter is chock full of other events for adults and families, and Wednesday nights are a great time to meet people at our rotating drop-in events and Vespers service.

Still, we know that life in 3D calls. Protests in the wake of the cover up of Daniel Prude's killing have brought many of us out of homes, and while we know that this is not a wise choice for all of us and many should continue to adhere to the very strictest social distancing, I know that the vast spectrum of activities and the risks that they carry are not all equal. Masks, social distance, and outdoor airflow makes us all safer. With this in mind, I write with a few invitations:

In the next week, you should receive a mailing about our Memory Tree (to be held Nov. 1). You are invited to mail back the leaves to us or come to the church and hang them on our Memory Tree outside the church on October 25 - 28.

Later that week, on October 31, we're hosting a ghoulish garden walk. If you weren't sure what to do for Halloween, this will be a safe, fun option outside with your church community. If you'd like to help, please email our Director of Religious Education, Sheila Schuh (sheilas@rochesterunitarian.org).

Finally, on Election Day and the day after, November 3 and 4, you are invited to stop into the church building between 1:00 - 6:00 PM. There will be a pathway through the Sanctuary to help you orient your body and your soul in a space that we love during days that may feel challenging and anxious. Masks required, bathrooms not open, and we'll be monitoring capacity, so you may need to wait outside for a little while, but we'll be glad to see you. This is the first time we are opening the building since March, and we trust that together we can successfully navigate these challenges to make this experiment possible.

Our commitment to be inclusive and continue to care for the most vulnerable among us continues. In addition to this in-person invitation to seek respite and a break from constant news, we will have all day online drop-in support, and on both November 3 and November 4, we'll have 30-minute evening services to invite you to connect with fellow UUs from our church and others in the area. Links and details in the newsletter.

That's all for now, beloveds. Except only and always this: know that you are loved and that you are love.

Love and courage,
Rev. Shari