

# Powerline

First Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Niagara

639 Main Street  
Niagara Falls, NY 14301  
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September 2019

*Learn, Love, Build a Better World*

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The Powerline is a monthly publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara. It is free online to anyone who wishes to subscribe- members, friends, and anyone else anywhere in the country and beyond.

It's a simple one step process: Just email your request to [uuniagara@gmail.com](mailto:uuniagara@gmail.com) or click the link. Please spread the word.

Many thanks to our contributors Marie Spears-Howard, Peter Diachun, Erica Kopp, and Betsy Diachun.

## Sunday Programs

### **September 8:** “Harvest”

As autumn approaches, we give thanks for the bounties of another year.

**John Snodgrass**

*Coffee hour: Board*

*Usher: Shelley Baxter*

### **September 15:** “Soulful Sand”

“In every grain of sand is a story of the earth.” Inspired by this quote of Rachel Carson, the sermon will explore the grains of sand that give soulful purpose to our lives.

**Susan Frawley**

*Coffee hour: Erica Kopp*

*Usher: Linda Hurley*

### **September 22:** “The Divine Reality”

Today I am going to ask you to imagine that you were born on an isolated island.

**Don Reidell**

*Coffee hour: Patty and Bill Lisk*

*Usher: Marie Separs-Howard*

### **September 29:** “Finding the Freedom for Renewal...”

The Jewish new year (Rosh Hashanah) starts this evening at sundown, a time for considering our spiritual health and realigning ourselves with what is best—a fresh start. Today we'll consider a possible pathway to finding renewal.

**Terry Kime**

*Coffee hour: Nan and Glen*

*Usher: Shelley*

## President's Report

It is unusual for individuals or a group to have an opportunity to play an important role in a major cultural reform. I think our small Church has such an opportunity now in reducing racism which has plagued us for centuries. There is an active movement which we can join to do just that.

There are a number of scholars, writers, and activists who have identified some of the causes of racism and are suggesting ways to change them.

The first thing we need to do as a group is to commit to each other to work together because none of us is capable of doing it alone. The first goal we must achieve is to learn what the people in this movement have learned. This task is too big for any one of us to do, but it could be done effectively together. None of us has to read every book, attend each presentation, see all the available videos, or struggle with recognizing our own roles in supporting and continuing racism. We can share what each of us learns, and help one another as each of us goes through the personal challenges of overcoming our fears, shame, embarrassments, discomforts, and pain we may each suffer.

We can do this because we are a small group of people who are joined in this Church largely because we have found like minded people which is not easy to do. We know each other and trust each other. Yet there are enough of us to do what must be done if we work together.

We have already made a good start. A few have read the book "White Fragility" and have committed to read other books on this topic and movement and share what we find. Most of us have seen the video by Debby Irving. We need to discuss it one on one, as small unorganized groups, and as a whole Church. I will try to see that every person has a chance at every Church function to have an opportunity to share what they may have found or ask for help or support. We have a lot work to do. We have only started. Let's continue together!

Peter

The link to the Debby Irving video is:

<https://youtube/oD50x5XNEpg>

## Announcements

### BAZAAR news

It was fun for all, exhausting, but fun. I have always appreciated how well our folk work together.

There are still items we have for sale, and we will work on line to sell them.

I can't begin to thank the team.

Everyone had knowledge in different areas, and that was priceless. We found lots of our items on line, with prices and a tidbit or two on the items. Did you know that we still have a vintage elephant marionette, and an antique wash bucket agitator. And I personally learned about Milk glass, and Starbright cut glass, knowledge I will use in the future. We were kept busy by all the fantastic donations. Some really cool stuff. Thank you everyone for the support, and help that is needed in this type of event.

Oh yeah, wanna know how much we made????? \$3500. and still counting. WOOHOO.  
Marie

### Our People

It is with sadness that we announce the death of Karen Labosky in July. Karen had been living in Elderwood for a few months. It was nice that she was able to keep her dog with her and enjoyed walking him around the grounds. Unfortunately, as she aged Karen became confused easily, so it was good to move her to this protected community. Our sympathy goes out to her family and friends.

Joy and Norm Rowlinson have been suffering from bad health all spring and summer. Joy has moved them into a new apt. in North Tonawanda. So far, Norm is still in rehab until they can get enough help to bring him home. They would both appreciate notes, I'm sure. See new address in the Directory.

Jean Speck has also moved to into Elderwood. See the new Directory for her new address and contact information. She too would enjoy visits but call ahead since they keep her busy with various activities.

### Local Church News

Everyone who chipped in to help at our Jumbo Sale in July is thanked for all their efforts. We believe that when all the money has come in we will have cleared close to \$4,000. Marie Howard deserves a HUGH THANK YOU for all her work. There are still items in the little room off Unity Hall. We'd like to get that room cleaned up to use as a nursery. We do have cloth bags for sale at \$1.00. Good to use for the environment and to replace any plastic bags which won't be given out any more by stores.

Left over from the sale we have a good carpet washer. We decided to keep it for members and friends to use personally as needed. Please speak to Erica to schedule a day you wish to borrow it. Individual users will have to purchase all soaps and supplies needed for their job.

We no longer have a sexton living in the church. However, we are looking into finding someone. Please make sure that you pick up, put away and clean up anything you use. It is not fair to leave it for another church member to do it for you.

We need help with our Website. If you have expertise or know of someone, please see Peter Diachun, Bd. Chair.

### **Programs**

John Snodgrass will be preaching every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month. Starting in October he will hold an hour long class for those interested.

**Book Group** will continue to meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every other month from 5 to 6 at the church. We'll try to get the title out to everyone. All are invited to join us; even if you haven't read the book. Discussions frequently turn to general topics, brought out in the book. We just finished "White Fragility", a book about white privileges that we don't even realize we have. The Board has asked the Book Group to bring this to the attention of the congregation. So we'd like to make you aware of a conversation on "Democracy and the Legacy of Racism" to be held on Thursday, 9/19 @6:30 PM at Asbury Hall, 341 Delaware Ave., Buffalo. This is a free program put on as part of the BUFFALO HUMANITIES FESTIVAL. More information may be attained at [info@humanitiesny.org](mailto:info@humanitiesny.org).

### **NEW YEAR**

There is a new Church Directory. There is a new Coffee Hour List. There is a new Usher List

All of these have been produced by our Secretary, Erica Kopp. See her for copies. Also, please read over your contact information carefully to be sure we have correct phone numbers, e-mails and addresses. Please note on your calendars the dates you have been asked to take a role in the Sunday Service. If that date is not convenient, please switch with someone. Let ERICA know if you change a date or if your contact information is not correct.

## UUA

### Making Room at the Table

By [Erika A. Hewitt](#)

June 19, 2019

"We are the people who return to love like a North Star and to the truth that we are greater together than we are alone."

—Rev. Theresa Soto, in "[We Hold Hope Close](#)"

I spend a lot of my Saturday evenings feeling awkward at wedding receptions, because most guests don't want to talk to The Minister. Are they worried that I'm boring, or that I'll look them deeply in the eye and ask about their relationship with God? Either way, being alone with a plate of hors d'oeuvres is preferable to going home to finish my sermon.

A few weeks ago, though, I was delighted when a table of wedding guests—obviously friends, who'd traveled in from two states away—waved me over.

"We're therapists," one of them explained, "so nobody ever wants to talk to us, either." Upon learning that I'm a Unitarian Universalist, the entire group—not all of them white, not all of them straight, not all of them gender conforming—exchanged knowing looks.

"What?" I probed.

"That means you're safe," one of them announced as the others nodded. They're not religious, they elaborated, but they trust UU communities to accept them without judgement.

It makes you want to cheer, doesn't it, when outsiders praise the people you call home? I *so* wanted to gather up their affirmations to dole out back at the UU ranch... but I couldn't. As I smiled politely, I called to mind the UUs in my life who are queer; who live with a disability; who are people of color. I thought about their countless stories of their lived experience being painted over with the brush of privilege, and the harm inflicted upon them by people with good intentions. I remembered my colleague Sean Parker Dennison's reminder that there are many people in the world who are never completely safe—and don't expect to be.

Those of us inside the Unitarian Universalist fold know that when it comes to living our expansive, inclusive, anti-oppression faith, we fall short (sometimes in 3-D, technicolor ways). I do. And every time my privilege and I cause harm, I get to decide whether my arrogant decision that I'm enlightened or woke outweighs evidence to the contrary.

It was a gift, on that early summer evening, to be received by a group of strangers as if I belonged, and to hear them call my UU kindred a haven. While I know there's a gap between who they say we are and who we are in practice, those seven therapists gave me a second gift: they fortified my commitment to keep closing that gap, and to transform our UU communities into havens: a home for all who need us.

### Prayer

God who takes the form of people seeking connection, thank you for letting us off the hook when it comes to being perfect. Thank you also for *not* letting us off the hook; for calling us to rise to the promise of who we might be.



**About** Erika Hewitt is the UUA's Minister of Worship Arts and Editor of Braver/Wiser, a weekly spirituality series. In addition to serving the UUA half-time, Erika also serves as a Unitarian Universalist parish minister and wedding officiant in Maine.

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara  
Facilities available for Wedding Services,  
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"Singles Social Club" established over 40 years ago. We are a friendly group that welcomes newcomers to our activities, game nights, dances, picnics, restaurants and much more....come join us! (Ages ranging 50 to 80 years old now, but all welcome) Call for more info 716-550-1232. Find us on facebook: Singles Social Club

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