

Powerline

*First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Niagara*

639 Main Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14301
716-285-8381

October 2020

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 or click the link. Please spread the word.

Many thanks to our contributors Peter Diachun, Betsy Diachun, Andrea Galipeau, and Erica Kopp.

Sunday Services

October 4: Animal Blessing

Following in the traditions of St Francis, who is celebrated by Catholics on this feast day, you are invited to bring your pet or a picture of your pet to church as we hold up the 7th Principal of our faith and bless the animals in our lives that give us connection to the world web.

Speaker: Susan Frawley

Coffee Hour Host: Coffee Only

Usher: Erica Kopp

October 11: "The Common Good"

During this Coronavirus outbreak, individuals are being encouraged to wear face-masks and practice safety precautions "for the Common Good." And yet this turns out to be a divisive issue - to what extent are people willing to give up personal convenience and liberty for the sake of a "Common Good"? And can such a thing as the "Common Good" even exist in such a divided society?

Speaker: John Snodgrass

Coffee Hour Host: Susan Diachun

Usher: Erica Kopp

October 18: "Come In, Come Out"

In the season of national coming out day, October 11, we have a chance to honor LGBTQ members and allies. Coming out is a personal journey, be it for sexual identity or spiritual root realization. UU churches have been called gay churches and not just because they like other churches. Ha ha. It is because few faiths offer home and safety to LGBTQ people and their families. Come in, and celebrate Coming Out.

Speaker: Susan Frawley

Coffee Hour Host: Joan Davis

Usher: Teresa Labuszewski

October 25: *To Be Announced*

Speaker:

Coffee Hour Host: Andrea Galipeau

Usher: Peter Diachun

President's Message

This has been an important month for our FUUN Church. We started the new church season by resuming Sunday 11 AM Programs in person almost as before the Covid Virus caused us to suspend all in-person programs. The most important differences are that we all wear masks and practice safe distancing in our large building. We are getting almost the same attendance sizes as we did before the Virus.

Under the guidance of our 100th Anniversary Committee we have had a Sunday 11 AM Program on our church's history led by Ton Yots. AND two spectacular publicity events. One was a short story on Channel 7 which was broadcast several times. The other was a story with color pictures which dominated the front page of the weekend edition of the Niagara Gazette.

Our popular after church adult education program was resumed after being suspended because of the Virus.

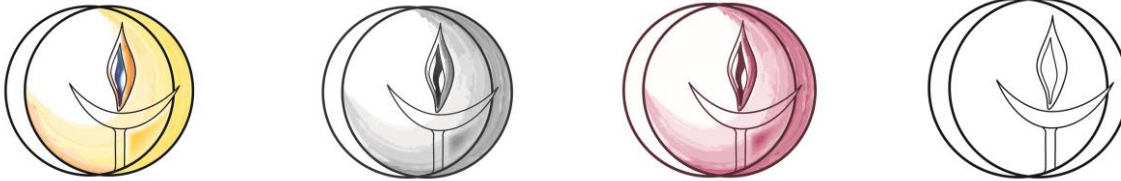
Sunday October 4 we plan to have our first ever Blessing of the Animals Program. This is not, however, the first Unitarian Blessing of the Animals Program. I witnessed one in the large Unitarian Church in Rochester at least 20 years ago.

We are pleased to be back with a running start. A special thanks to all the Church people who made this happen!

Peter

Our New Logo

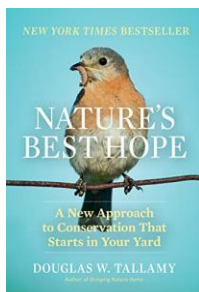
We are premiering our new logo, as seen after the Table of Contents. It was created for our 100 year anniversary but is generic enough to use anyway we wish. It can be done in color or black and white - or black and white with grey tones. Also, we put no writing with the picture itself, but anything can be added as wanted



Remembering Our Church

As we, the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara, celebrate our first 100 years at 639 Main St. we remember all the people who have come through our doors and stayed for various lengths of time. You may be one of them or someone you know or someone to whom you were related. If you can remember any stories they told you about being a “UU” we’d love to hear about them. They could be joyous, funny, sad, or life changing. We plan to put together a booklet including them all and would like to know by the end of September. If you know any names which should be included in our history or stories they have told please send to: uuniagara@gmail.com or call 716-285-8381 and leave your contact information

Book Group



The Book Club will meet on Wednesday, Oct. 21 at 4:30. The book to read is "Nature's Best Hope" by Douglas Tallamy.

Do come if you have read the book or not. We have far reaching discussions based on the book's subject. All are welcome in masks and practicing physical distancing. We are small in number and meet in Unity Hall.

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy goes to Teresa Labuszewski. Her mother passed away. We all share Teresa's sadness and grief. There is no plan for a formal service at this time.

On The Front Page of the Weekend Edition of the Niagara Gazette, September 26, 2020

First Universalist-Unitarian Church celebrates a century in the Falls

- By Edwin J. Viera edwin.viera@niagara-gazette.com
- Sep 26, 2020

While many are weary of 2020, its a big year for First Universalist Unitarian Church which has begun celebrating 100 years of its congregation and location on Main Street in Niagara Falls.

The Rev. O. Bruce Swift, from Middletown was the church's first minister, beginning his pastorate on March 6, 1920. Notices in the Niagara Falls Gazette announced that the church would be formally established on Oct. 17, 1920. There were 34 charter members of the First Unitarian Church of Niagara Falls, according to records from the E.H. Butler Library at Buffalo State College.

Universal Unitarian Churches have been known for accepting people of all religions as they do not follow a specific creed, but rather a set of ethics.

Elizabeth "Betsy" Diachun, is an elder and longtime member of the church who became a member in 1961 after moving to Niagara Falls. She has been an active member and has spoken on several occasions before the congregation throughout her time there.

Diachun, who called the 100th anniversary "amazing," spoke about some of the history about the building and its beginnings.

"When it was first built in 1921, the sanctuary/auditorium was more like a stage, up there, and it was done that way because in order to give room for a little theater meet here. And, especially if the church didn't make it, then the little theater could use the space. It wasn't until the 1950s, probably the '50s and '60s, that we had our biggest attendance and members numbers. They built that wall and set up and made the pulpit because now behind that there are classrooms and an office that they needed at that time."

The chairs in the sanctuary are from the church's early days as there have never been pews in the building. One interesting thing of note is that the limestone exterior of the building came from digging out the foundation of the site where the church is now. Throughout its 100 years, the church has always worked with the city of Niagara Falls on certain issues and has always been an advocate for social justice. Past ministers for the church have been civic leaders and interested in working with local government as well as being active in the community.

Over the past few Christmases members have done fun charity drives such as TP Tree, in which they made a Christmas tree of toilet paper to give to Heart, Love and Soul. When the idea of a border wall first became prominent, they did the same thing — a wall of food outside the front of the church which was taken to Community Missions.

Currently, Diachun said the church is struggling to attract younger members and the congregation that meets is typically only 20 people. Currently, there is no full-time minister but several of the older members

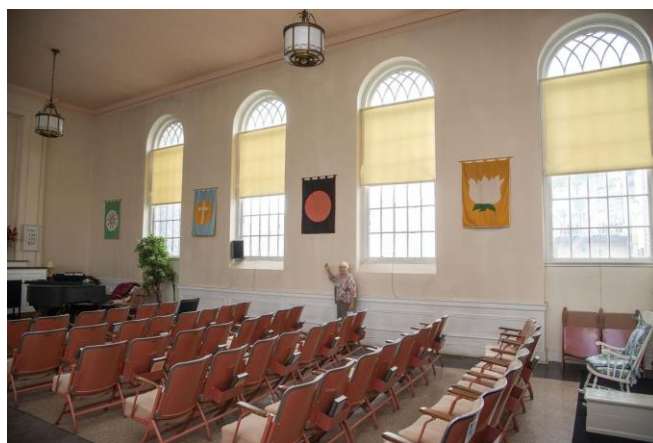
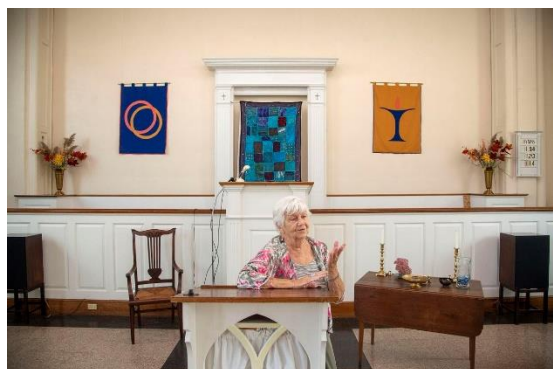
of the church have taken turns speaking. Other times Unitarian ministers come to speak as well as some college professors.

“The one challenge is that this is a very conservative area ...” Diachun said. “So, some people don’t understand that we’re so liberal. People come to us, a lot of people perhaps have married and have two different religion and they want to go to the same church. Also, being able to choose their own belief system can be hard to accept.”

Although the facility is 100 years old, there have been some upgrades made, such as the addition of more restrooms and the installment of an elevator for those who are handicapped. The sanctuary of the church is decorated with banners of several religion such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Unitarianism, etc.

During each church service, there is a time for joys, concerns and sorrows in which members can drop a stone into the remembrance jar near the pulpit. A candle can also be lit for a remembrance of a loved one who they have recently lost. In her time at the church, Diachun recalls some of the highlights of the church being an event called Taboo Topics, in which members would talk about things such as euthanasia/physician assisted suicide, hospice care, and a discussion about being transgender to educate teens in the community.

As the church celebrates 100 years, Diachun said she’s proud of how it has evolved and that the congregation remains grounded in the same socially engaged spirit this church was built on.



First Unitarian Universalist Church long time parishioner Betsy Diachun, a member since 1961, talks about the 100th anniversary of the Main Street church in Niagara Falls

JamesNeiss.com



https://www.niagara-gazette.com/news/local_news/first-universalist-unitarian-church-celebrates-a-century-in-the-falls/article_29a044a4-0010-11eb-9445-5793cef74746.html#:~:text=While%20many%20are%20weary%20of,pastorate%20on%20March%206%2C%201920.

UUA

My Ancestors' Dreams

By [Daniel Gregoire](#)

September 23, 2020

"...So it is better to speak
remembering
we were never meant to survive."

—Audre Lorde, "[A Litany for Survival](#)"

Some days ago, a member of my congregation asked me how I'm coping with all that's going on: a pandemic with no end in sight; the continuous loop of Black men being killed by vigilante police officers; a president who delights in stoking the fires of suspicions, resentment, and animosity among people as a way of furthering his autocratic agenda and his open fantasies of dictatorship. As if that were not enough, even the sun appeared to lose some of its shine because of the smoke of western wildfires darkening the skies.

This was before the death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg—
God rest her soul, and save us all.



How do I not fall to pieces every day, in a world so clearly on the very edge of a vast chasm, and anarchy in every valley down below? Everything is bewildering in this brave new world, with its checklist of 2020 anxieties. What can save us from the madness of despair in this context?

I told my parishioner that the thing that helps me is remembering that I am not alone in all of this. Yes, I have people around me—my wife, our families—but better still, I have the people who came before me. I have ancestors who were never meant to survive, but they did: they survived the sugar plantations of Haiti, the occupation of their land by American forces in the 20th century—not once, but twice—brutal dictatorships, exile.

I have ancestors and contemporaries who survived the upheavals of the 1960s in the United States, the riots in the cities across the nation, the crack epidemic and the AIDS epidemic, and the violence of New York City against Black people, immigrants, gay people—all during times when the very future of that place was an open question.

I am my ancestors' wildest dream come true, and I would not be here if it weren't for their dreamings, their hopes, and most importantly their living. None of us would be here were it not for those who lived and won a fight that they were not meant to survive.

That's what helps me. What helps you?

Prayer

Oneness of Life and Love, spirit of our ancestors, help us to transform our fears into the courage needed to create the world we desire.



Rev. Daniel Gregoire is the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Grafton and Upton in Grafton, MA. He loves being a guide to those on spiritual journeys and a companion to all in life transitions.

<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/ancestors-dreams>

"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

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara
Facilities available for Wedding Services,
Receptions, and Celebrations



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