

Powerline

First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Niagara

September 2020

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

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

August 30: “What the Last 100 Years Have Taught Us “

As a kick off to the celebration of our 100th year anniversary of FUUN, let's take a look at some of the obstacles we have overcome and strides we have made as a nation and as part of a global community. Come ready to share some reasons you have loved this church in the last 100 years.

Andrea Galipeau

September 6: Water Communion Service

In 1980, two Unitarian Universalist women-Carolyn McDade and Lucile Schuck Longview — created the water communion service “that spoke to our connectedness to one another, to the totality of life, and to our place on this planet.”

If willing and able - please bring a small container of water - to add to a communal container and if you'd care to share the significance to you - please be prepared to do so. We will add it to water collected in years past.

This Communion Service is an opportunity to express commitment to our Sixth Principle: "We covenant to affirm and promote the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all."

Sadly - our country stands against all major nations and religions by refusing to commit to the principle that water is a basic human right.

After the service, instead of our traditional end of summer ice cream social with self service ice cream and toppings - single servings of ice cream and desserts will be provided.

Hope to see 25% of the available seats filled!

Nan Simon

September 13: "Law and Justice"

The concept of "Law" implies a common standard of behavior and punishment, and yet no written law code has ever succeeded in maintaining true equality. We will briefly explore different types of "Law," including natural law, sacred law and secular law, and some ways in which they strive for justice (or don't).

Speaker: John Snodgrass

Coffee Hour Host: Board

Usher: Betsy Diachun

September 20: "Water Memories"

In the movie Frozen 2, the snowman, Olaf talks about water memories. Scientifically, there is validity in that. In faith and life, there is much that water means, represents and calls us back to. Focusing on this natural and spiritual resource in our lives.

Speaker: Susan Frawley

Coffee Hour Host: Teresa Labuszewski

Usher: Andrea Galipeau

September 27: 100 Years

Speaker: Tom Yots

Coffee Hour Host: Betsy Diachun

Usher: Marie Spears-Howard

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: Shelley

President's Message

The Corona Virus has had an impact on everything, including the FUUN Church. For about 2 months at the peak of the Virus in New York all Church Programs were suspended. A few individuals continued to work on some projects, most notably the completing of the improvements to the 3rd floor of the building to make it suitable for a residence for our Caretaker.

In June, when New York State allowed the reopening of Churches at 50% capacity, we “gently” resumed some Sunday Programs using masks and social distancing. We were also able to conduct our Annual Meeting in late May as scheduled providing both opportunities for Members to attend in person or fully participate by phone.

We have been able to conduct full, in person, Summer Sunday Programs because our building is large with plenty of space to be able to maintain suggested distances to supplement the wearing of masks. We do not have the ability to set up and conduct full virtual programming. Bill Lisk has set up a system allowing us to conduct meetings using conference calls which has been used several times.

At this time we expect to conduct in person programming continuing the precautions used this summer of wearing masks and social distancing since we have enough space to allow physical distances. We know that some Church people do not want to expose themselves at all. We simply do not have the equipment or the ability to set up full virtual programming to replace or supplement our person to person programs. If a person who can do this would volunteer, it would be great.

A disappointing result of the Corona Virus is the cancellation of the entire concert season of the Buffalo Gay Men's Choir. We were scheduled to host a concert on December 13.

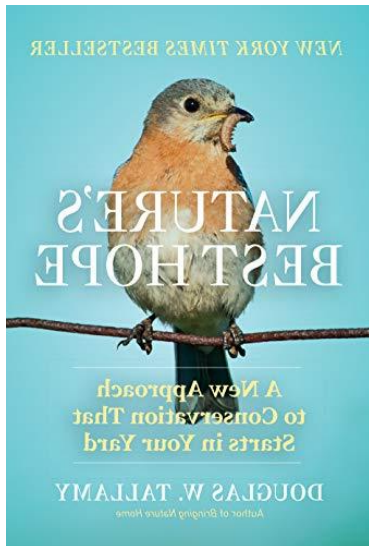
FUUN's 100th Anniversary activities are being planned by a Committee Chaired by President Elect Andrea Galipeau. This Committee has been active and busy. There is more information about this elsewhere in this Powerline.

Peter

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 out to Yvonne Stocker, long time active member, on the death of her partner, Jessa, in July. Jessa attended many special events at the church and will be remembered.

100 Years of UU History in Niagara Falls

Here we are 100 years old, with a beautiful, unusual building on Main Street in Niagara Falls, and people are still asking: “What is a Unitarian-Universalist?” or a “UU?” As we begin our centennial celebration, I shall try to answer that.

First, to know about whom I’m speaking our church is located at 639 Main Street, in the same block as the main Post Office. The congregation has been at that location since 1921. Before that we shared housing at various locales around the City.

We were a Unitarian Church until 1961 when two main line religions which had grown out of the Jewish-Christian tradition formed a union. These two religions, Unitarianism and Universalism, are committed to [Seven Principles](#) that include the worth of each person, the need for justice and compassion, and the right to choose one’s own beliefs. We have no creed but covenant around these ethical principles.

The UUA is our central organization with over 1,000 member congregations around the world. These churches and fellowships are autonomous; choosing their own congregational leaders, setting their own priorities and choosing their own ministers and staff. Congregations vote for the leaders of the UUA, who oversee the central staff and resources.

To maintain and support our beliefs we draw from many sources:
Our own direct experience of understanding the mysteries of the universe;
words and deeds of far-seeing women and men; wisdom from the world’s religions;
Jewish and Christian teachings and Humanist teachings as well as the results of science.

We are grateful for this religious pluralism which enriches and elevates our faith.

Our members have always been active in the community and the church has supported many endeavors within the City. For years we hosted recitals by the Music School of Niagara. We worked with other churches to help develop the original Unity Park, low income housing apartments. Still working with low income housing, Niagara Area Habitat for Humanity had its office and held meetings at our church. Many may remember our Coffee Houses held in the 1960s. More recently we hosted a few meetings of “Pints for Progress” [i.e. #Live Niagara].

As we celebrate our 100th birthday we shall review our history and invite the community in to learn more about us. If you, or someone you know, was a part of our history we’d love to have a comment from you about your experience – be it joyous, sad, or life changing. It can be sent to uuniagara@gmail.com or by phoning 285-8381.

UUA

Heaven Broken Open

By [Jami A. Yandle](#)

July 1, 2020

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

—Hebrews 13: 2

Last Friday night, six hundred people from my religious faith watched an online drag show together. It was one of those moments when you realize something epic is happening. I felt joy—a joy I haven’t felt in a long time—from the tingling on the top of my skull to the electricity that flowed through my body down to my toes. The drag show was heaven broken open, given to us for the evening. We were the angels, and the kings and queens were our royalty. Everything for a little while was perfect—and I saw the face of my God.

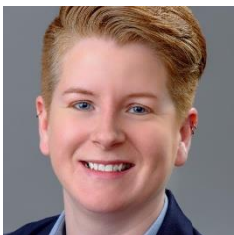
A lot of people think that drag is “just” dressing up, but to me drag is about more than taking the stage. If you’re trans/non-binary, like me, the actual performance is pretending to be cisgender. This means that drag is the most authentic thing I can be a part of: watching, or taking the stage as a King. Queer people are in fact royalty, the early creators who utilized drag for survival—and, in some cases, protection. When Kings and queens are on stage, their witnesses form a holy council. Here is where my God can be found: nestled in the crux of the connection of humanity.

My God is too big to fit into any pronouns. My God accepts my entire sacred and holy self. My God knows I was created for an expansive life, and knows that the margins hold the most sacred and holiest parts of humanity.

When I witness a drag show, I’m witnessing my God in all who are present. I can feel our connection: the rhythm of life running through all of us, and in all things, is so obvious it almost hurts to feel it. In that moment, all of the struggles and pain incurred from existing as a person who’s non-binary are washed away, and I am made new, again.

Prayer

Remind us that when the weight of the world is too much, we need to rest our wings a bit. For the spirit of a new day is waiting to renew us and subsume all that we are holding for good.



Rev. Jami A. Yandle (they/Jami) is a board certified hospice chaplain serving The Upstate of South Carolina. Jami is a graduate of Union Theological Seminary and was ordained by the First Unitarian Church of Toledo in 2018. They initiated and facilitated the revision of the Unitarian Universalist Second Source to honor words and deeds of “prophetic people” rather than “prophetic women and men.” Additionally, Jami helped create the UUMA Community Ministers chapter in 2020.

<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/heaven-broken-open>

"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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