

Powerline

*First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Niagara*

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

February 2022

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.

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

Sunday Services

February 6: "Truth, Meaning, and Maintaining Connections"

As UUs we believe in our individual right to search for our own truth and meaning in life. How does this affect our connections to one another, especially in these times when all social connections are becoming frayed by the pandemic?

Speaker: Donna Evans-Deyermond

Usher: Paul Brundage

February 13: "Religion"?

How did the word "Religion" originate? And is the word "Religion" a one-size-fits-all for the diverse faiths of the world?

Speaker: John Snodgrass

Usher: Wally Lamb

Adult Education Class 12:30 - 1:30

A look at some Native American forms of Comedy and Entertainment

February 20: "Love in all Colors"

February is a month with many focuses. Love, Black History month, Suicide awareness month. Just to name a few. What are the ways our perception of love and loving each other is colored by how we see and experience others?"

Speaker: Susan Frawley

Usher: Betsy Diachun

February 27: "Weapon or Tool - Political Correctness"

It has been said that the term Politically Correct first appeared around 1970. If you talk to 100 persons, you might just get as many definitions of what it means to each person. To some it is a tool. To others, it is a weapon. In this reflection, our speaker will strive not only to give a balanced definition but will also help us understand what it means to be a Unitarian-Universalist in these highly charged times and how we can help others as well as ourselves negotiate this verbal mine field.

Speaker: Ron Skowronski

Usher: Marge Gillies

President's Report

Wintertime, especially following the holidays, can often be a difficult time for many. As we carry on our journey into 2022, we in Western New York have already been faced with a multitude of disappointments: a single coin toss kept the Bills from moving on to the SuperBowl, extreme winter weather has made life difficult for many, principally those who cannot rely on the promise of a safe and warm home, and we continue to deal with extended frustrations and heartbreak resulting from the ongoing limitations and impact that COVID-19 has had on our lives.

I, myself, know all too well the frustration and despair that comes with the inability to share in the pain and isolation of loved ones during this time. However, our community here at FUUN has the good fortune of hearing from a variety of speakers who remind us how to stay positive and keep faith in better days to come. I am personally so thankful for the several positive messages that have come from our speakers this past month and dedicate this month's message to each and every one.

Donna Evans-Deyermond reminded us of the importance of living our lives to the fullest extent despite potential failure as failure brings new opportunities. John Snodgrass spoke of overcoming less-than-desirable nicknames and their historical impact on religions. The Reverend Susan Frawley celebrated for us the good that Winter has to offer and directed our attention towards the coming Spring. Ron Skowronski wrapped up January over two weeks speaking to the effect of optimism and gratitude as the foundation for positive living and the importance of living the truth of our 7th principle: Respect for the Interdependent Web of All Existence of Which We Are a Part.

As the President of First Unitarian Universalist of Niagara, I am deeply moved and truly proud of the conversations and energy that we put into the Universe. We are so fortunate to be privy to the meaningful and positive messages we hear each week. I would like to thank each and every one of our speakers this past month for helping to move us forward in our dark hours of Winter.

In the Spirit of moving forward this year (and as a lesson from the fatal 13 seconds of the last Bills game), every second counts. Live your life to the fullest, overcome others' perceptions, stay optimistic and grateful, and remember that we are because others are. If you give something a chance (the Bills, for instance!) it could win.

In Faith,
Andrea

Stewardship

I don't know about your childhood experience, but in my house, most things were done to music. My dad would put the speakers from the stereo in the windows on the back of the house and we played badminton to Harry Belafonte singing about picking bananas. I washed dishes and dusted to Mario Lanza singing La donna mobile from Rigoletto or the Monkees' Last Train to Clarksville. As teenagers, we all had the radio playing as often as possible, debating whether the Beatles were better than Paul Revere and the Raiders-a lot of nationalism in those arguments. Most of the TV shows were variety shows featuring various bands and singers. Ed Sullivan, Andy Williams, Carol Burnette. Think about the old television shows and I am sure the theme songs come to mind. Every time I hear someone whistle I think of Andy Griffith and Mayberry.

The movie industry started adding music to films in 1908. Camille Saint-Saens composed the first film music. Now, it would be unthinkable not to have background music in a film. It emphasizes the mood of the movie. Who does not recognize John Williams' Star Wars theme? Or the theme to The Bridge on the River Kwai? Even if you haven't seen the movie, you have heard the songs.

Last year I bought my dad a digital tablet called a Grandpad to give him a way of accessing the outside world. He is 96 and already isolated by his age, but the pandemic has made it all worse. I will tell you that he uses it primarily to listen to music. He finds old songs and can play recordings of the same song by many different artists. We debate which we think is the best version when I go to visit. He remembers events associated with each song: where he was when it was popular, the first time he heard it, significant events that happened then. Dick Clark called this phenomenon the sound track of our lives.

We often say music is the universal language. It can bring us together as nothing else can. It transcends language. You get a feel from a song. Think of how God Bless America became a tradition at ball games after 9/11. We stand as one and sing together. And in the very difficult year of 2021, with the January 6th insurrection and our continued isolation from one another, your stewardship committee decided that we need to reconnect with one another in a meaningful way. We can learn more about one another and have fun at the same time. So in the next few weeks, we are asking you to choose a song that has particular meaning for you and if you care to, share with us why it grabs you. We will use those songs to play our own wacky version of Name that Tune at our pledge Sunday event on May 1st. Patty Calback and I will be your musical director and game show host, respectively. We hope to make new musical memories with one another and we won't even have to sing. We'll let Patty do that. (Unless someone else volunteers to join in.)

On behalf of your stewardship committee,
Betsy Diachun, Patty Lisk, and Teresa Labuszewski

UUA

The Rest That Will Heal Us

By [Atena Danner](#)

January 26, 2022

“Rest is reparations.”

—Tricia Hersey, Nap Bishop of the [Nap Ministry](#)

I recently bridged some holidays with time off to create a two-week vacation, declaring it Hibernation Season. I vowed to slow down, enjoy myself, resist unnecessary urgency, and let my mind and body renew. Intentionally adding measures of comfort to my routines felt wonderful, yet I found myself repeatedly defending my right to ease and demanding justification for my self-care. Audre Lorde was right (of course): resisting this programming is radical.



I am a Black, queer, neurodivergent woman. My experience at the intersection of these identities has meant a life of intersecting hustles for well-being, because of the ways people and systems respond to these identities. Every day is a decathlon of hustles when I’m just trying to be. Increased risk of heart disease, depression, breast cancer, infant mortality, COVID-19, and more, for so many of us just trying to be.

It is hurtful and infuriating that people accept that that’s just the nature of our story—particularly here in the United States. Our society is exceedingly effective at pissing on Black people and calling it rain, so people accept that we are naturally defiled. This seemingly inexhaustible cultural lie is applied to queer lives and disabled lives, too: when we are made to believe we’re fundamentally worthless and must earn our right to live, then others can profit from the belief that our reason for living is to prove and to earn and to justify our lives. To hustle.

As a Black, queer, neurodivergent somebody, if I want well-being to be my truth, I must reclaim and protect it. This is why I committed to a season of rest, and why my citadel is my warm bed. Every chance I get, I am reclaiming well-being.

Spell for Rest and Renewal

I draw on the power of houseplants, candlelight, laughter, and dreaming to reclaim the rest that will heal me. In defiance of white supremacy, ableism, and patriarchy, I refuse to light the other end of my candle. I will boldly protect my softness, defend my sleep, and liberate all of my unassigned minutes, hours, and days. I am one soft animal among many: a cell in the breathing world’s body. Let us be cared for as such. May it be so.



[Atena Danner](#)

Atena O. Danner (she/her/hers) is a poet, artist, and activist.

<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/rest-will-heal-us>



Return Service Requested
February 2022

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara
639 Main Street
PO Box 2566
Niagara Falls, NY 14302

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639 Main Street,
Niagara Falls, NY 14302-2566
P.O. Box 2566
(716) 285-8381

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