

Powerline

*First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Niagara*

639 Main Street
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January 2023

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 Paul Brundage and Erica Kopp.

Sunday Services

January 1: “ The Fire of Commitment”

As we gather to celebrate the beginning of another year, many will be making New Year Resolutions. Resolutions in religion, just like in law and politics are more often than not...Non-Binding. In essence they come to mean nothing. Our speaker will strive to stimulate and encourage his listeners to find ways to make authentic commitments. The service will end with a Burning Bowl Ceremony, which is designed to symbolically help us to seriously release what may hinder us, while encouraging us to embrace what will help us in our growth.

Speaker: Ron Skowronski

Coffee Hour: Marge Gillies

Usher: Paul Brundage

January 8: John Snodgrass

Speaker: John Snodgrass

Coffee Hour: Susan Diachun

Usher: Teresa Labuszewski

Adult Education Class January 8, 12:30 – 1:30

January 15: “Spirituality of Travel/ Transylvania Tales

Travel can affect us in unexpected ways. What is a pilgrimage and why do we do it? What calls us to go back to Transylvania every year? Our Unitarian roots go back over 450 years to the Transylvania region. Barbara Walker, Commissioned Lay Minister (CLM) from West Shore UU , in Rocky River Ohio will join us via Zoom to share the stories of West Shore’s journey to their partner church in Bagyon .Their 22 year relationship with the village and the connections they have built show us the wonders of our collective global spirituality.

Speaker: Barbara Walker

Coffee Hour: Marie Spears-Howard

Usher: Pam Smith

January 22: "In the mid bleak winter"

Like our UU hymn of the same name, we will explore the offerings of mid winter in weather, spirit and faith

Speaker: Susan Frawley

Coffee Hour: Patty and Bill Lisk

Usher: Shelley Baxter

January 29: "The Longhouse Midwinter"

A look at some traditions of the indigenous peoples, celebrating winter in New York State.

Speaker: John Snodgrass

Coffee Hour: Potluck

Usher: Marge Gillies

Adult Education Class January 29, 12:30 – 1:30

President's Report

I hope everyone's Holiday Season was wonderful and Happy New Year too! Now as we come into January 2023, we have again experienced another snow storm but this time we got it good here in the Falls as well as Buffalo and parts of the Southern Tier.

Our hearts and prayers go out to those families who lost loved ones trapped on the roads during this terrible storm. Hopefully the rest of this winter will be much better as far as the weather goes.

I, Erica, and Bill had a meeting to keep business moving. I'm looking forward to our next meeting in January 2023 to business with the other Board Members.

As far as work on the church building, the leak repair has been completed by Bill and the Contractor but Bill is continuing to keep us updated on any changes that could come up. Heating System leaks were discussed at our meeting and Bill explained to me and Erica about these leaks. There seems to be some water displacement running from the Kitchen, Boiler Room through Unity Hall. Bill also

explained to me and Erica at the meeting how the thermostat controls operate and how to make any changes in heat scheduling etc.

Also we have a shoveling service to keep our driveway clear thanks to Patty who has a friend who works for that service. Patty is in constant contact with them and gives them a check from us (UU) every time they shovel for us.

We had an opportunity to have some local church group use Unity Hall but because of security issues due to lack of people to help keep the building secure we decided to turn down the rental.

These meetings would have been in the evening. Patty's security is a concern because she lives upstairs and our location in the Falls is in a fairly high crime area.

These are just a few of the things we need to do and in the next few months, we will go forward with these current changes and the ones to come.

President of UU Board - Paul Brundage

Guest Speaker

Barbara Walker (CLM) WestShore UU , Rocky River has been a UU for most of her adult life (and probably always has been!) .Her UU journey has taken her to explore a variety of churches throughout the US as well as globally. In 2017, she entered the Commissioned Lay Ministry Program with a focus on adult spirituality and worship. She created a program called Thursday's @ WestShore for her home congregation with an intention to bring spirituality into daily lives. In 2020 and 2021 she made the pilgrimage to the Transylvania partner church and enjoyed the connections with our 450 year heritage. She resides in Lakewood, Oh (suburban Cleveland) with husband , Keith and cat Sadie, and visits her daughter, Katrina in Washington DC as often as possible! In her spare time she enjoys her job as a nanny to small children, journaling, and planning her next adventures.

Potlucks

We will have potluck at the end of each month. Everyone is welcome. Bring a dish to pass if you are able.

UUA

Love Is Showing Up

By [Melissa Jeter](#)

January 12, 2022

“...When the shepherds are back with their flocks, the work of Christmas begins: to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry....”

—[Rev. Howard Thurman](#)

You are not alone. I read these words in an article about grieving the death of estranged parents. While there are many people who died alone from Covid, there may be just as many people dying estranged from family members. I am not alone.

I read that there may be all kinds of reasons that people are estranged from their parents. I was tired of parenting my parents. I was asked to choose sides in their divorce and I chose me. That choice left me to build a new foundation.

The odd thing about the deaths of both parents is that they have been out of my life for more than twenty years—as long as I have been a Unitarian Universalist. I needed a community of people. Relationships can be healing and therapeutic. I found people who sewed, knitted, and sang. Few people close to my family have been to church with me: my maternal aunt and my high school mentor. Both Black women are now deceased.

I keep questioning whether it's grief that I feel now, when I was cut off so long ago. I am grateful for every condolence post or card and basket of food that this community has given me. It really has been a beacon of light for me. By the light of this community, I grew; got my first pets. I have been able to put my ideas into words and share them out loud. This faith has been my home.



I recall one of the last times I spoke to my mother at Christmas. I told her that I would be spending Christmas Eve with a family going through homelessness. I said that we would cook dinner with them, stay overnight, and give them gifts in the morning. My mother said that this was something she could not be doing

She could not—and therein lies the difference. I could show up to extend love and kindness to strangers.

My heart has been broken open again and it hurts even while it beats. Showing up, serving, forgetting myself: Love showed up in me, for people with no home at Christmas, and it healed a few worlds. Every time someone showed up for me, I learned that love is greater than skin deep.

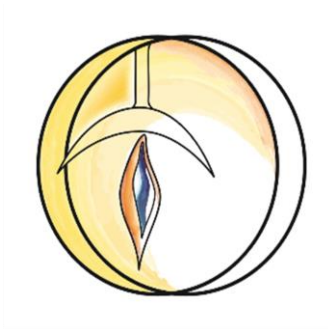
Prayer

Spirit of Life and Love, let us show up for those whose relationships are ruptured, and for the adult children who have the hard task of creating boundaries so that they may seek, find, and live in loving communities. For wherever the kindness to strangers shows up, there is your mercy and your grace. So be it. Amen. Àşę.



Melissa Jeter (she/her/hers) is currently a full-time seminarian at the Methodist Theological School in Ohio as well as a full-time librarian in Toledo, Ohio. Melissa is the student minister affiliated with First Unitarian Church of Toledo. She has served on the social justice subcommittee of the City of Toledo Human Relations Commission. As an adult services reference librarian, Melissa helps people learn how to use computers and electronic media. She holds a Master of Science Degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois and a Master of Arts degree in Sociology from the University of Toledo. Before her work in libraries, she worked or volunteered in programs based on community issues housing, civil rights, domestic violence at nonprofit agencies in Toledo, Ohio.

<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/love-showing>



Return Service Requested
January 2023

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Receptions, and Celebrations



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