

# Powerline

*First Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Niagara*

November 2023

639 Main Street  
Niagara Falls, NY 14301  
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*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 Shelley Baxter, and Erica Kopp.

## Sunday Services

### **November 5:** "Gratitude or Gruntitude"

As we prepare for Thanksgiving (Friendsgiving) we are often reminded to be mindful of an attitude of gratitude. UU literature speaks of the "Generous Life of the Spirit". In this post pandemic time, considering all the challenges that exist in our world, can we authentically be grateful and mean it? Are there consequences for a lack of gratitude? A "soul" provoking reflection for all of us.

*Speaker: Ron Skowronski*

*Coffee Hour: Paul Brundage*

*Usher: Marge Gillies*

### **November 12:** "Late For the Sky"

Life is full of omens and worries, and yet our predictions rarely materialize in the ways we envision them, and are soon forgotten as life introduces new victories and sorrows. In 1974 the songwriter Jackson Browne encapsulated his forecasts and fears in an album called "Late for the Sky," but could not see the tragedies and triumphs ahead of him. What can this songwriter's story tell us about our own predictions for the future?

### **Adult Education Class October 29, 12:30 - 1:30**

*Speaker: John Snodgrass*

*Coffee Hour: Diana McNamara*

*Usher: Marge Gillies*

## **November 19:** “When the Holidays Hurt”

This sermon will explore feelings we all experience about the Holidays, and how our Unitarian Universalist community's traditions and services help us better handle the ghosts of Holidays Past. We can find joy in new traditions, new "chosen" families and just being together. From food to drinks to decorations and getting together with friends and family -- even if it is on a screen, we can focus on the fun instead of the hurt -- if we set our minds to it.

*Speaker: Donna Evans-Deyermond*

*Coffee Hour: Susan Diachun*

*Usher: Marge Gillies*

## **November 26:** “Thanks and giving”

As the autumn harvest season closes and we traditionally take time to give thanks, let's also talk about the giving that can be in our thankfulness

*Speaker: Susan Frawley*

*Coffee Hour: Potluck*

*Usher: Marge Gillies*



## President's Report

I hope this message finds you all in good health and high spirits as we embrace the beauty of a new month. I would like to take this opportunity to share some exciting updates and important announcements with you.

Firstly, I am pleased to inform you that the Board has received an inquiry from Jim regarding the possibility of installing solar panels at our church. The Board of Trustees is currently reviewing this proposal, taking into consideration its potential environmental and financial benefits. We will keep you updated on any further developments regarding this matter.

Next, I would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to Betsy for her tireless efforts in organizing the upcoming church Thanksgiving event. This promises to be a delightful time of gathering and fellowship as we join together to celebrate and give thanks. Please don't forget to contact Betsy for further details and sign up in the narthex with the number of people attending and the food you plan to bring.

I also wanted to share with you that Craig Mohkiber, the distinguished Human rights Lawyer from the United Nations, addressed our congregation last month. His insightful words captivated our attention, shedding light on important global issues and inspiring us to play an active role in making the world a better place.

Our October potluck took a slightly different twist this month, as it transformed into a dessert potluck in perfect Halloween fashion. Thank you to everyone who contributed to making this event so enjoyable and memorable.

On a positive note, I am pleased to inform you that Donna Evans-Deyermond is feeling much better. We look forward to her sermon in November. Donna's insights and wisdom are always cherished and appreciated by our congregation.

Lastly, I would like to remind everyone that John Snodgrass will be continuing his engaging Adult Religious Education classes about Israel. This educational opportunity not only provides valuable knowledge but also fosters meaningful discussions and interactions amongst our members.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our church's mission.

Erica

## Thanksgiving Dinner at Our Church

Join us for a celebration of gratitude and togetherness! The church is delighted to invite all our members and friends to a Thanksgiving dinner with delicious food and fellowship.

Peter and Betsy will be bringing the Turkey. Betsy created a sign-up sheet in the narthex. Please indicate the number of people attending from your party, as well as the food contribution you will be bringing.

If you need any further assistance or have additional inquiries, please don't hesitate to contact Betsy at 716-754-2830. We look forward to seeing you all at our Thanksgiving dinner!

## Our Members

*Paul, as The Penguin from Batman, joined us at church in October*



Desi and Hector will be heading back to New York City but will continue to join us virtually on Zoom for our Sunday sermons until they return to Niagara Falls. . Although we will miss their physical presence, we are grateful for the technology that allows us to stay connected and participate in our worship services together. Despite the physical distance, we believe that our virtual gatherings can still foster a sense of togetherness and support

## Nadja

When the Americans were bombing Germany they knew where the barracks were at Dachau so not to bomb them, but Nadja said they bombed the factories. The factory she worked in making parts for war supplies for the Germans. When a bomb hit the factory there was a fire. Nadja said her jacket caught fire and she ripped it off.



Nadja said there was no food for three days after the bombing. They were all so hungry. The American soldiers came and liberated Dachau concentration camp. The Red Cross came and brought the food and clothing.

The war was over 1945

Nadja said everyone she knew the girls she worked and lived with during the years of captivity left Dachau and went home. Nadja stayed she said “what was there for her, alone on the farm in Lenin.” The Americans Red Cross took care of her.



Nadja stayed for about a year. During that time an American soldier Theodore Graca would visit Nadja. Theodore, his brother Ziggy and their parents lived in Poland. When things were getting bad with Hitler. Theodore’s family moved in 1939 to America, Niagara Falls, New York. Theodore enlisted in the American Military and went to Europe to fight during WWII. Theodore was there to liberate Dachau. He would come about every week to see Nadja. Nadja said they would just talk and she looked forward to his visits. Many months past and they decided to get married. They planned a wedding.

### Life Drummers

By [Christin Green](#)

October 25, 2023

"I am the drum, you are the drum, and we are the drum. Because the whole world revolves in rhythm, and rhythm is the soul of life, for everything that we do in life is in rhythm."

—Babatunde Olatunji, Nigerian drummer, educator, social activist, and recording artist

At every drum circle I lead, there's usually someone who says, "I'm just here to watch." I extend a special welcome to these folks because I believe they're ripe for transformation: Go ahead. Sit and watch. I bet that by the time we're wrapping up, you'll feel differently. I believe that we are all "life drummers" just waiting to join in the rhythm.

I often start out with the heartbeat rhythm—boom *boom*... boom *boom*... boom *boom*—as if we're unifying our heartbeats in a ritual of sound and vibration. Then the beat gets more complicated: somebody adds a shaker; somebody else jingles a tambourine. It sounds completely different: it's a conversation with a heartbeat.



In that transformative space, the spectators sitting outside the circle experience change within their own bodies. We forget that we have percussion instruments at our fingertips. We are the drum! We can pat our legs, we can tap our toes, we can *move*—and the vibration in our bodies gives people permission to try something else.

I encourage people, in between rhythms, to switch instruments, share, and try completely different elements. That kind of encouragement, of everybody mixing it up, might encourage that person sitting behind the circle to decide it's non-threatening: "I'm not gonna be called out for doing it wrong, and that's what I was really afraid of." When there's no expectation of performance, and it's a communal activity, it's a completely different experience than they were expecting.

Sometimes we're told we can't do something and we hold onto it—maybe even from childhood. That can hold us back until we're sitting outside of the circle of community because we're afraid that we can't do it... whatever "it" is.

It takes courage to enter the circle and pick up a drum. It takes self-compassion to try and play it with the group. But the magic often happens: the person who's been programmed to think before doing suddenly joins in. Our bodies carry that programming just as our minds do, but our bodies can bring us to new spaces that are brave and courageous. Our bodies and spirits move at the speed of trust, and a brave space—like a drum circle—can allow that movement to flourish.

## Prayer

Spirit of Life, Love, and Good Vibrations, I am grateful for the gift of my own heartbeat. I humbly pray that my fear and worry will fall away, that "doing it right or wrong" will no longer be the driving force in my life. May the rhythms of my life meet and merge with others to create the music of beloved community.

*Editor's note: This reflection is the final piece in a five-part series called "Embodying Self," reflecting perspectives on the awe, the pain, and the power of living at home in our bodies, and of accessing our bodies' wisdom.*



Rev. Christin C. Green (she/her) is a mixed race, adopted, queer, able-bodied, cis-woman. She was raised Baptist in Liberty, Missouri and found Unitarian Universalism in her 20s in Rockville, Maryland. She enjoys writing, cooking, drumming, and relaxing in nature when she isn't serving as the Assistant Minister for Congregational Life at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax in Oakton, Virginia.

<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/life-drummers>



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Return Service Requested  
November 2023



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