

Powerline

*First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Niagara*

February 2023

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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

February 4: Are you a friend of Cupid ?

With Valentine Day almost upon us, there is all the more emphasis on LOVE. In this reflection, our speaker will ask us to consider how loved we feel. Why are we so obsessed with Love. Does IT truly make us Free? Come... Let us reason together.

Speaker: Ron Skowronski

Coffee Hours: Teresa Labuszewski

Usher: Wally Lamb

February 11: "Great Thundering Snakes"

We've all heard about the serpent in the Bible, but who are some other prominent snakes in world mythologies? And despite this creature's bad reputation, can it also be a sign of life and peace?

Adult Education Class, February 11, 12:30 – 1:30

Speaker: John Snodgrass

Coffee Hour:

Usher: Wally Lamb

February 18: "Love Languages"

In this month of love, it's fun to think and talk about love. Bell Hooks has written the book, "All about love," revisiting the way we all look at love. This sermon will connect love and spirit, and how each of us shows love differently.

Speaker: Donna Evans-Deyermond

Coffee Hour: Susan Diachun

Usher: Wally Lamb

February 25: "Who loved you into faith?"

In seminary, professors asked us who loved us into faith? It is a real exercise in looking at roots of faith as we close the side with love "30 days of love"

Speaker: Susan Frawley

Coffee Hour: Potluck

Usher: Wally Lamb

Nadja

Nadja and Ted have been occupied with their careers and lives.

When Ted and Nadja bought the bar they also had the four apartments above the bar.

Ted got sick one day, went to the hospital and died the next day with kidney failure. He was 46 years old. Nadja a young widow threw herself into her business. She traveled with her church group and dated some.

At still a young age Nadja had a kidney removed and also had cancer surgery. Nadja continued working her bar.

One day Nadja received a letter from Poland. She is reading and re-reading this confusing letter. A hand written letter talking about Alexandra.

Alexandra was a friend Nadja met in Dachau. They lived in the concentration camp and worked in the German factory making war materials. As they walked to and from the factory each day together they saw the town of Dachau a movie theater, a church, all the businesses. One Sunday Nadja and Alexandra decided they were going to go to church. They snuck out of the gate of their camp, the gate they walked through every day to walk to the factory. They made it and were on their way to the church when the police stopped them.

Nadja was surprised because she thought they would blend in with the public. She thought their clothes looked like the people on the street. The policeman took the girls to the jail house. They stayed there the whole day. Then they were took back to the concentration camp. I guess the police must have believed them they just wanted to go to church.

Alexandra was a good friend. Nadja said sometimes Alexandra would wash Nadja's clothes for her. Of course was by hand and in cold water. After the camp was liberated Alexandra was pregnant wanted to go back to Poland. Nadja did not, she had no family to go home to.



The letter writer said her name was Natallia (Natalie). Nadja is thinking "I had a sister named Natalie." Natalie was on a tour bus in Poland and was sitting next Alexandra. They were talking and Natalie was talking and mentioned her sister Nadja. Alexandra said she had a friend named Nadja at Dachau that got married to a Polish American soldier and went to live in Niagara Falls, New York, in America.

Nadja finally let it sink in her sister Natallia (Natalie) survived Siberia.

UUA

Willing to Fail

By Amanda Poppei

January 31, 2024

“We are all failures—at least the best of us are.”

—J.M. Barrie

There’s a sign hanging in my therapist’s office that says, “What would you do if you knew you couldn’t fail?”

I know it’s supposed to be inspiring, to encourage people to try for their dreams. But I’ve always found it a little silly. I mean, of COURSE you’d do all kinds of things if you were guaranteed to succeed at them.

Picture me: running my own TV show as the latest spiritually-grounded national expert on...well, just about anything, I suppose, since I couldn’t fail.

Lately, I’ve been thinking instead about what I could do, maybe must do, even though I know I could fail.

With a blurred gym in the background, a white person with short hair holds a handweight out from her body, so that it’s the center of the picture’s focus.

This came home to me the other day when I was lifting weights. That week, we were trying for a PR—a “personal record,” basically the most weight you’ve ever lifted in that particular way. I had plateaued the last few times we tried, lifting the same weight even though I knew logically I had been getting stronger. Finally, the coach came over and told me to add some more plates on, to make the weight bar heavier.

“But I don’t think I can do that much!”

“That’s the point!” she told me. “You’ll never know how much you can do until you figure out what you can’t do.”

Something clicked. I added the extra plates. I was sure I wouldn’t be able to lift it—but I was newly willing to try and fail.

I set that personal record. I added more plates, and set another personal record. Then I added still more plates...and couldn’t get the bar off the ground. That final fail helped me know I had actually hit my limit. It helped me understand more completely my own strength.

I’m pretty sure that taking a sharpie to signs in your therapist’s office is frowned upon, so I’ll let it be. But if I could, I think I’d substitute the question: “What can you do only if you’re willing to fail?”

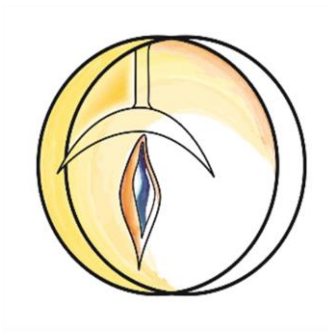
Prayer

Spirit of life and love, God of many names, help me to fail. Remind me that success is not the only measure of a life. Remind me of the power of holy risk, of sacred gambles. Help me to fail, and wrap me in soft care when I do.



Rev. Amanda Poppei (she/her/hers) serves as Senior Minister at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, VA. She also serves as co-chair of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. Amanda is also a certified Ethical Culture Leader, having served over a decade at the Washington Ethical Society.

<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/willing-fail>



Return Service Requested
February 2024

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



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