

Powerline

First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Niagara

November 2018

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.

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

Sunday Programs

November 4: *“Sanctuary for the Spirit”*

When our world seems to be spinning out of control, how can we cultivate equanimity and inner peace? We can find sanctuary in the simple, everyday moments of our lives.

Kristina Church

Coffee hour: Kathy McCunn and Wally Lamb
Usher: Patty Lisk

November 11: *“Death and Beyond”*

An exploration of different religious beliefs about the afterlife, compiled and delivered by someone who has no idea what happens after we die.

John Snodgrass

Coffee hour: Stephen Wittkowsky
Usher:

November 18:

Susan Frawley

Coffee hour: Paul Brundage
Usher: Jesse Higuera

November 25: *“The Faith of Doubt”*

As Unitarian Universalists we have long affirmed that doubt is our cutting edge. But can it be our faith and a blessing as well?

Rev Don Reidell

Coffee hour: Pat Velky
Usher: Joy Rowlinson

President's Message

In light of the recent events of pipe bombs sent to critics of the president and the shootings at the Tree of Life synagogue in Squirrel Hill (which was Mr. Roger's neighborhood-Won't you be my neighbor?), I have been thinking about words and how we use them. I have been thinking that they can wound like the rifle in the shooter's hands or they can be a soothing balm on a wound.

The last time Reverend Terry Kime was in our pulpit, she joked, after we sang a hymn particularly badly, that the reason Unitarian Universalists are so bad at singing hymns at church is that they are too busy reading ahead to see if they agree with the words to be able to pay attention to the music. I think there is a lot of truth in that. When Joe Biden recently spoke at UB, he said, "Words matter. Words matter." The old "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me" is dead wrong. Words matter. Well crafted spoken thoughts can improve the world. When we use disrespectful rhetoric, when we "other" people, we not only hurt those we are speaking about, we hurt ourselves and our loved ones. People can be inspired to do good or incited to do harm, by words.

Reverend Don Reidell told us last Sunday that in a survey of high school students, an astonishing number admitted to cheating on tests, stealing and lying to their friends-and that they thought that was all right. "Everybody does it." Remember that perennial teenage mantra? We all used that one. And I am sure all of your parents responded similarly to mine. "And if everybody ran into a fire or jumped off a cliff, would you do that too?" Could it be that they learned that from us? Everybody cheats on their taxes. Everybody tells white lies. I had a friend who used to justify not treating his customers or employees very well by saying, "It's just business." We hear politicians pandering, saying whatever is expedient at the moment and saying something completely different to a different audience. That was then, this is now. Where are the rocks that will make a firm foundation? When did it become a liability to be reliable, informed and be able to be factual in our speech? When did we just start making stuff up and calling it the truth? When did we stop being able to say I don't know the answer but I'll try to find out? We have taught whole generations to believe no one and to take care of number one. I am tired of attack ads. I am tired of political "debates" that are not debates because no one ever answers the questions they are asked. They just repeat their talking points that are designed to gin up the base. And I am tired of moderators who don't hold them to account for doing that.

What does all this have to do with our church and Unitarian Universalism? It is this. We UUs do not come to church for the music. We UUs do not come to church for the rituals. We UU's come to church to listen to well crafted words that help us understand the world and our place in it, better. We UUs come to church because we are curious and want to hear what others have to say about things that matter to them. We UUs come to church for the community and for the words. Let us each choose our words carefully and with love and kindness.

I believe in You
Teresa Labuszewski

Announcements

WORK DAY

SATURDAY November, 10 2018 from 10 AM to 4 PM

Serving Peter's chili at noon.

Inside and outside jobs. Some requiring muscles and some requiring brains and some requiring both!

Come help to get the building looking spiffy!

Build a Wall

We're building a WALL to make Niagara Falls great again! Your donation of non-perishable foods will be most helpful and gratefully received. To make this work you must remember to bring your cans to church on Sunday! Accepting items through December 16. Everything will then be donated to Community Missions.

UUA

Love Does Not Disappear

"Mysterious Source of Love, moving within and between and among us; upholding and connecting all: the living, the dead, and the generations yet to come. We give thanks for the web of all creation, strands interwoven. And for the gifts of love, which can never be ungiven or unraveled."

—Rev. Molly Housh Gordon

In the eighteen years I've served as minister of my small-town congregation, I have led 96 memorial services, most for people I have loved. I didn't realize how much the deaths would hurt. The longer I stay, the deeper I love and the more I grieve. This seems so obvious, but I was surprised by it. Another surprise has been how our beloved dead seem to make themselves known; how they seem to linger with us for a little while.

Once, after a memorial service, everyone left the church and gathered on the sidewalk in the sunlight of a still, summer afternoon. As we stood there, a huge gust of wind blew down the street. We could see it coming, almost like a tumbleweed. For maybe five seconds, the wind was all around us and over us. We turned and watched the gust blow down the street and then it was completely still again. "There she goes," someone said.

Another time, I was about to lead the memorial service for a man who shared a love of butterflies with his wife. Their home was filled with images of butterflies and we had put a photo of one on the program. As I stood at the church door, a huge orange and black butterfly flew near. It circled me three times, above my head, around my shoulders, at my knees and then flew away. When I told his wife about it, she nodded. "Butterflies have been all around me since he died," she said.

Last spring a beloved elder died who believed he would be reincarnated as a red-tailed hawk. I told the congregation about his death at Sunday morning services. I had taped a picture of a red-tailed hawk on the front pew where he always sat. Several people told me that as I was making the announcement, they were looking out the sanctuary windows and saw a large hawk soaring above the church.

Over the years I've heard many stories – stories about dragonflies and rainbows and love songs coming on the radio at just the right moment. Maybe it is just coincidence. Maybe we're looking for signs so we find them. But maybe those we love are nearer to us than we realize. Maybe love is vaster than the limits of our understanding. I believe that it is.

Prayer

Source of Love, we are sustained and upheld by the love of those who have gone before us. May we know, deep in our bones, that love does not disappear.

About the Author: *Elea Kemler has been the minister of First Parish Church of Groton, MA for 18 years. She mostly loves being a small town minister and gets to bless just about everything from chickens to the new postmaster. She is also the mother of two fourteen year olds and therefore very brave.*



<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/love-does-not-disappear>

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



639 Main Street,
Niagara Falls, NY 14032 - 2566
P.O. Box 2566
(716) 282-8381

E-mail uuniagara@gmail.com
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"Singles Social Club" established over 36 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

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639 Main Street
PO Box 2566
Niagara Falls, NY 14302
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