

Powerline

First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Niagara

June 2018

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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.

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 Teresa Labuszewski, Betsy Diachun, and Judy Bongiovanni.

Sunday Programs

June 3: "A Moral Revival: Dr. Martin Luther King and The Poor People's Campaign"

In the final year of his life, Dr. King saw that poverty was not just another issue and that poor people were not a special interest group. In 2017, Rev. William Barber is picking up where Dr. King left off. Bob LaVallee will talk about how Unitarian Universalists have a special lens to bring to this moral revival.

Bob LaVallee

Coffee Hour: Peter Diachun

Usher: Paul Brundage

June 10: "Salvation 2.0"

Description: Like Religions of Salvation, Social Networking promises to connect the peoples of the world, while releasing us from our physical bodies. But this new paradise, with its promise of connection, brings new divisions and allows the exploration of new frontiers of intolerance. Will this new salvation succeed in making us more ethical and compassionate? Or will it empower our inner demons? We'll see.

John Snodgrass

Coffee Hour: Jennifer Gray

Usher: Pat Velky

June 17: "Thanks for the memories"

Our use of memory in everyday life is an important part of how we see the world. Whether personal, global, or collective, memory influences many actions and reactions. Come stroll down memory lane and have some fun with memory games.

Susan Frawley

Coffee Hour: Board of Trustees

Usher: Betsy Diachun

June 24: Free Thinker Sunday

Formal services end as of June 17. There will be lay-led programs in the summer, but we aren't sure when these will begin - perhaps we can take up the Presidents' message about discussing our spiritual and emotional rituals on June 24th.

We also think there is a service at the Chili Cobblestone UU Church on July 1. It is always fun to visit this historic site, and I believe Susan Frawley is preaching there that Sunday. We'll get more information as it becomes available and pass it along on the Internet.

Our next formal service will be our Water Ceremony on September 8, 2018, John Snodgrass will be facilitating. Maybe another ending on the Maid of the Mist...

Presidents' Message

Peter Diachun's free thinkers presentation about Reverend Pearson got us thinking about what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist, and why it is important that we maintain a presence in Niagara Falls. Universalism was a religion that refused to accept the dogma of a vengeful God who insisted in an absolute obedience to his doctrine. They believed in universal salvation. They thought it impossible that a loving God would condemn large groups of innocent people to eternal hell because they did not have the opportunity to accept Jesus. This was Reverend Pearson's Aha! moment. But it is a moment that happened hundreds of years ago for the Universalists.

In the late 1800s, Hosea Ballou, one of our Unitarian forefathers, stressed the use of reason in religion. So our tradition is one of belief in a loving God and the ability to use our minds to decide what is ethical and moral, rather than simply following a document (the Bible) that is rigid and cannot change with the evolution of mankind. We believe that the Bible was written by human beings who brought their own prejudices to their writings. We see it as an important document that teaches us about morals, but also as an historical document that reflects the era it was written in. Jesus and his Apostles, if they appeared today, would probably not be carpenters and fishermen, but techno geeks using Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to recruit their followers.

So, even though Reverend Pearson believes in universal salvation (Universalism) and the use of reason in religion (Unitarianism), he is not a Unitarian Universalist. Thomas Jefferson predicted that within a hundred years of the founding of our country, we would be a majority Unitarian country. What is it about our tiny denomination that has kept us tiny? We think that this is an idea worth exploring. We also think that Peter may have put his finger on part of that reason last Sunday. He talked about visiting a Pentecostal church and what a powerful emotional experience it can be-one gets swept away. As a child growing up in the Catholic Church, Teresa loved the stained glass windows, the ritual and incense and the mystery of the Latin mass. What is our emotional, spiritual ritual? Do we have one? Is that important?

Let's have this discussion over the next few weeks. Most of us have come from other religions or from no religion. What is it about our church of free thinkers that brings us together in loving community?

With belief in all of you, Teresa and Erica

Our People

Bryce Malluma-Kopp is graduating from Niagara Falls High School. He plans to go to Australia for one year.

UU Announcements

The month of June holds two opportunities to show off our church and help the community

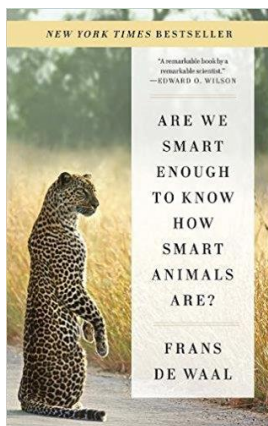
Participatory Budgeting

From 10AM to noon on Thursday, June 21st, and from 6 to 8 PM on Wednesday, June 27th, the city will hold meetings as a part of their Participatory Budgeting process. Through a citizen-led process, they hope to create a list of “place making” projects in several neighborhoods throughout the city. One of the targets is the South End in which the church is located. More information will be available in the Gazette. Such meetings will be taking place throughout the city.

Cyclists

Then on Saturday, June 23rd, we will be hosting a group of about 30 recent college graduates who are cycling across the country in support of Habitat for Humanity. They will be riding in from Rochester and sleeping in Unity Hall, and leaving early Sunday morning. We will be preparing a spaghetti dinner for them. Please let Peter or Betsy Diachun know if you are available to help.

Book Discussion Group



Our readers and talkers will meet at June 19 at 7pm in Unity Hall. We will be discussing *Are we Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?* by Frans de Waal (353 pg.)

Our group tends to talk about ideas presented in our books so it is not necessary to have read the book to attend and share your opinions (although it helps). Everyone is welcome so join us for a chat

Visual Art



Pencil

Say's Phoebe

Bonnie Soley

Playlists of the Spirit

By Connie Simon

May 23, 2018

“When you know the notes to sing, you can sing most anything.”
—Oscar Hammerstein II

“*Doe, a deer, a female deer...*” Many of us instantly recognize that as the first line of the song “[Do, Re, Mi](#)” from “The Sound of Music.” You might even be able to picture Julie Andrews (oops: Maria) telling the Von Trapp children that these notes are the “tools we use to build a song. Once you have these notes in your heads you can sing a million different tunes by mixing them up” — after which, of course, she bursts into song. Within three minutes, they’re all harmonizing and parading through the streets and waterways of Salzburg having a good ol’ time.

I know it’s corny, but it’s true. Think of all the music you know: every song you’ve ever sung, or danced to, or heard on the radio. Every single one of them is a different arrangement of the same notes. Using the power of imagination, composers have mixed those notes up in a gazillion different ways to express a multitude of emotions.

No matter how I’m feeling — happy or sad, sick or well, fragile or unbreakable, loved or unloved — I turn to music. Music is my solace and my comfort, the one thing that’s always with me. I feel its vibration deep in my soul; it’s my spiritual practice. Music can calm me, excite me, and sometimes its beauty even moves me to tears. I have playlists for exercising, celebrating, mourning, driving, housecleaning... and some for just *being*. From Bach to James Brown, there’s an arrangement of those same notes for every occasion in my life, including the hard times. Music tells the story of my life.

I recently went through a really rough patch. I was recovering from an accident and still trying to keep up with school and my other responsibilities. I felt out of control and lost. Once again, music saved me. I played quiet, soothing music when it hurt to move. I sang inspirational gospel music for encouragement when I began to stretch my sore limbs. Today I listen to thumping hip-hop as I work my muscles back into shape. I’m forever grateful for my music — those do-re-mi’s that fill my soul and provide the playlist for my life.

Prayer

May we each be blessed by the presence and power of music in our lives.

About the Author

Connie Simon is Intern Minister at the Unitarian Society of Germantown and Contract Chaplain at Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia. Following graduation from Meadville Lombard Theological School in 2018, she intends to pursue parish ministry.



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



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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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