

Powerline

First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Niagara

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April 2019

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, Erica Kopp, and Betsy Diachun.

Sunday Programs

April 7: "Finding A Place"

Blurb: "We sing Rumi's words: "Come, come, whoever you are, wanderer, worshipper, lover of leaving. Ours is no Caravan of despair..." what does it mean to have a religious home? A physical home? How do we find a place to settle and what helps us in the search for home? "

Sally Hamlin

Coffee hour: Pam Smith

Usher: Joy Rowlinson

April 14: ""Spheres"

A look at ancient beliefs, rituals, and controversies."

John Snodgrass

Coffee hour: Kathy McCunn and Wally Lamb

Usher:

April 21: "Bee a good egg"

Living harmoniously in nature is part of our principles. The call of spring and new life is often depicted with eggs. Various faiths use eggs as a symbol of this time in their liturgical year. The awakening of plant and animal life will inform our talk and lessons this Sunday

Susan Frawley

Coffee hour: Peter Diachun

Usher: Betsy Diachun

April 28: "The Active God"

The activity of god in the world depends on the word "IF".

Rev Don Reidell

Coffee hour: Board of Trustees

Usher: Marge Gillies

President's Message

When I was growing up in Niagara County, our family's water for drinking came from a well. It had lots of minerals in it as its source was rain filtered by the earth and stone on its way down into the water table. There was no piped in water in our house. We collected the rain or melting snow from the roof into a cistern system my father had built to provide non potable water for washing up. Most people directed gutter water away from their foundations with long downspouts. Not my dad. He put it in underground storage for use later on. Now, I have river water piped into my home after it passes through a water filtration plant. But I still filter it again before I drink it because I worry what can enter along the way to my tap. Pipes are old, some are broken and can let bacteria and contaminants in. And it removes the chlorine taste that I don't like. After Flint, Michigan's leaded water prompted us to look at our water in Western New York, I checked to see if my water filter removed lead. I was shocked to find that it did not. The company did put out new filters after Flint that did remove lead. They cost more but lasted longer. I soon found, however, that it took hours to filter a single pitcher of water as opposed to fifteen to twenty minutes for the old filters. Initially, I was annoyed. Why did it have to take so long? But I did not want lead and other heavy metals in my drinking water. So I solved the problem by getting a second pitcher. When one is filtering, the other is full.

My brother had initially replaced the water filters at the home he shares with my parents with these new filters, for the same reason I had chosen them. But the last time I visited, I noticed that they had gone back to the old filters that did not remove lead. I asked why and was told "those filters are just too damn slow. I don't have time to wait."

Several days after the massacre in the mosques in Christ Church, New Zealand, I was listening to NPR. They had several artificial intelligence (AI) and tech specialists discussing how the shooter had been able to livestream his killing on YouTube and Facebook. And how, despite countless AI and man hours, even days later, there were still permutations of his videos popping up on various sites. They said that when someone with know how posts something on the net, it is virtually impossible to completely remove it. The conclusion they came to was that as long as people are allowed to upload live content onto a site without a delay while the material is filtered by AI or a real person, it is impossible to stop this from happening again. This would require a queue of some kind and a delay to publication. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc., all say they are not responsible for the content that people publish on their sites. They are not "news organizations", just platforms for publication. Yet they are where many people get their news and it is their news feeds that generate much of their income. The New York Times has an online presence, but because it is a news organization, it is subject to decency and libel laws. They can be sued for their content, so they have to take the time to fact check and filter it, unlike the average Joe, posting what he likes instantly. Unlike the Australian national who killed 50 Muslims and livestreamed it on the web. This is neither right nor just. How awful for the loved ones of those killed to have that pain. How dangerous for young or damaged minds to see the video and think that what they are seeing is normal or okay because it is online.

We have become such impatient people that waiting a few hours for a pitcher to fill with clean, uncontaminated, safe water that is beneficial for us, is too much of a wait. We're willing to accept a few heavy metals in our water so we can have it faster, even if that may damage our brains. We want what we want and we want it now. People say things online that they would never say face to face with another person. We have lost our filters. We have lost the ability to reflect on what we might post online and how it may affect those who read our post or see our video. Some people call this filter, civility. Some people say civility is code for don't say what you mean, don't rock the boat. But there is a difference between saying what you mean and being cruel, disparaging, insulting or just downright dangerous.

Oh, there are problems with filters. Sometimes they remove too much. Who gets to decide what should be filtered out from someone's post or video upload? In China, the internet is very carefully monitored for anti-government sentiment. No, it won't be easy and it won't always work. But I have a suggestion for the online behemoths as to how to make a start. I would point them toward our seven principles as the foundation for their decisions on how to filter, modified a bit as follows.

There is inherent worth and dignity in every person. Find it and respect it.

There should be justice, equity and compassion in human relations, even on the net.

There should be acceptance of one another and encouragement to growth.

There should be a free and RESPONSIBLE search for truth and meaning.

There should be the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process in choosing what gets posted. This takes some time to accomplish.

There should be the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.

There should be respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

I think these are pretty good guides for interactions on the web as they are for all of our interactions with each other.

Filters are necessary. Not every thought we think or everything we do, needs to be shared with the entire world. Let's all start using our filters-in our relationships, in what we choose to watch online or on TV, in what we listen to and in what we say to one another. We can make a better, safer world that way.

I believe in you, Teresa Labuszewski

Announcements

ANNUAL Congregational Meeting

We will have the Annual Meeting on May 19, 2019 at 12:30pm.

BAZAAR news APRIL

It's spring cleaning time....

A great time to put things aside for the Bazaar.

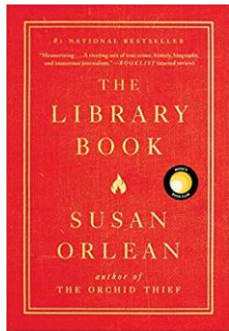
It's also time to think about gardening and what you need and want to thin out and give to the Bazaar

The Plant Sale can be a big big BIG selling event. I will have plastic flower pots available.

I'll be at the church on Wednesday April 10th about .noon to start sorting out and organizing the items already at the church. Would love some help if you can make it.

Thanx, Marie

Book Group



Wednesday, April 17 - 4:30 - The Book Group will meet to discuss "The Library Book" by Susan Orlean. This fascinating non-fiction story of a fire, which lasted 7 hours, in the Los Angeles Central Library. It details the fire, the staff, the fire workers, the library collection and happenings, in a unique makes which makes for a delightful read. Come and join us. We stray from the books we read and discuss philosophical issues too!

Social Justice Movies

Schedule for Sundays at 12:30:

April 7 - TED talk Edible landscapes

April 14 - RBG (Ruth Bader Ginsburg Marge is bringing DVD)

May 5 - TED talk Birth certificate adoptee justice

ONCE A YEAR BRUNCH

For the 6 weeks of Lent the South Wilson Fire Co. puts on a fantastic brunch each Sunday from 9 AM to 1 PM. The cost is around \$10 per person. So that we get back into Niagara Falls for our church service, we usually attend right at 9 AM on Palm Sunday; this year it is April 14th. The Fire Hall is on Chestnut St. - between the Village of Wilson and #104. If you have any questions, or need a ride call Betsy at 754-2830 or ediachun@gmail.com. The brunch benefits a good cause, is a picture of Americana at its best, and the food is delicious!

UU District News and Announcements

Are you excited about Building a Vocal community this July?

The time to register for CERSI is just around the corner! The registration window begins and ends earlier this year, and air conditioned dorms are limited and provided on a first come first serve basis, so register early! Registration opens **March 15**. \$0 registration fee before **May 15** (\$75 registration fee after May 15). Registration closes **June 15**

For more information about registration, visit www.cersiuu.org/register We look forward to seeing you in July!

UUMAC: one-week, residential family camp for UUs, including YOU!

Loved by kids of all ages, this is a peak life experience for those who have been in attendance. Not kidding! Located on an idyllic college campus in Central PA, someone else cooks AND cleans: vegan, vegetarian, omnivore, and with MANY and VARIED allergy requests. The children go to programming in the morning. You can have some free time or do a fun workshop with others. This year's theme talks are on Non-Violent Communication, and led by the Rev. Lora Kim Joyner. Check out the YouTube on the UUMAC website homepage for more information. Contact Ann Andrex, andrexes@comcast.net for detailed help or encouragement! Or visit www.uumac.org

Are you a Chalice Lighter?

A chalice lighter is an individual who contributes three times a year to calls to support congregations engaged with growth or expansion projects. Anyone can be a chalice lighter and help grow Unitarian Universalism! Learn more about the program and sign up at <https://www.uua.org/central-east/programs/chalicelighter>

A Conversation About the End of the World: Militarism, Climate Justice, and You

WHEN: Tuesday, April 2, 7:00 PM

WHERE: Emerson Room, UU Church of Amherst, 6320 Main St.,
Williamsville, NY 14221

WHAT: Urgently calling religious liberals of all faiths, for a much-needed conversation. Humanity's climate emergency is now so grave that climate scientists are raising the prospect of human extinction. Based on narrow, highly debatable views of Scriptural authority and Biblical prophecy—views scarcely consistent with a loving God and mature human responsibility—many religious conservatives are taking a “bring it on” approach to humanity's final days. Distressingly, the policies promoted by both major parties and their mainstream news media—not just Republicans and FOX News—are actively (perhaps unwittingly) fulfilling religious conservatives' desire to bring on Armageddon.

Hoping to spark principled resistance by religious liberals, facilitator Patrick Walker will cite mainstream militarist narratives—such as Russiagate hysteria and the slanted media portrayal of Venezuela's crisis—as types of foreign policy “business as usual” liberal churches must forcefully oppose if we wish our voice to count in saving a livable climate and, ultimately, human civilization. Hope you'll join this timely conversation.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

For the month of April our Wayside Pulpit will carry the message: “We will **#Halt Hate** by the 1st UU Church of Niagara”. This movement is sponsored by Niagara University: IMPACT/ReNU and Leadership Niagara.

We all are to spend 24 hours (basically on April 2) choosing not to hate, inspiring others, consciously seeking to understand, to practice tolerance and gain perspective.

The GOAL is, if we start with 24 hours, we can make it 1 week, 1 month, 1 year, A lifetime!

SPREAD THE WORD. Share a story of why and how you made a conscious effort to not react and to impact positive change!

God Manifest

By Nathan Ryan
March 20, 2019

“To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

I was on the window seat of a flight when I saw God manifest. It took a while; at first I had my headphones in, reading a book, when three young women sat near me—all of them wearing clothing with the Harvard insignia. They introduced themselves and then described what they were studying and what they planned to do when they graduated.

These college students didn't seem interested in what the others had to say. It sounded more like they were trying to outjockey each other for position and prestige to prove that they were smarter, more accomplished, or more worthy of studying at Harvard.

After about an hour into the flight, two of the women fell asleep. The third studied the other two to make sure they were completely asleep, then unzipped her bag and pulled out a package of Double Stuf Oreo cookies.

She removed two Oreos and, looking around again, carefully unscrewed each of the cookies. She took the two cookies that still had cream on them and mashed them together to make a quadruple-stuffed Oreo. She looked back at both of her peers to confirm they were still asleep, and took a bite.

I began to imagine this woman as a little girl, loving Double Stuf Oreos and asking her parents why they didn't make Quadruple Stuf Oreos. I imagined her parents telling her that Oreos aren't healthy, and forbidding her to eat them.

Now, on the plane, she's finally free from the constrictions of childhood, finally free to eat her Quadruple Stuf Oreo—but I saw the caution she used. Did she feel shame because our culture projects so much onto the way women look, or did she not want to share? Did she fear that her peers and possible competitors would see her?

Whatever the explanation, I also saw a woman surrounded by the pressures to conform to adulthood, being the adult she always wanted to be when she was a child. She was as God made her, not who everyone else wanted her to be. I got to see God manifest.

Prayer

God, please help us shed all that tells us we aren't allowed to be as you made us to be. Help us love this world and its people.



About the Author: Rev. Nathan Ryan has served as the associate minister at the Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge since 2012. A Louisiana native, Nathan makes a mean red beans & rice, and believes that good food goes a long way toward world peace.

<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/god-manifest>

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



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<http://firstuunf.org>
Find us on Facebook



"Singles Social Club" established over 40 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 Club

*If you have comments or articles you may submit them to
uuniagara@gmail.com with the subject "Powerline*



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