

Powerline

First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Niagara

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May 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.

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

Sunday Programs

May 5: "Unitarian Universalism Mysticism"

We often think of our faith as standing solidly (and only) on reason and science, yet the first source of our Living Tradition names "transcending mystery and wonder" as an important part of our spiritual understanding as well. Today we'll consider the historical roots of this part of our faith and explore a bit more what it might mean for us.

Rev. Theresa Kime

Coffee hour: Nan Simon and Glen Herman

Usher: Peter Diachun

May 12: "MAYDAY"

A look at ancient ritualistic celebrations for welcoming May, and how some of these traditions have been pushed to the margins of society. We'll find some clues about old May games in the story of Robin Hood and the merry gang in Sherwood Forest.

John Snodgrass

Coffee hour: Marie Howard

Usher: Erica Kopp

May 19: "Wonder Part 1"

The art of wonder is a big part of our UU faith. What do we wonder about? We will be creating a wonder box to be used in the May 26 service.

Susan Frawley

Coffee hour: Linda Hurley

Usher: Teresa Labuszewski

May 26: "Wonder Part 2"

Examining the idea of wonder, we will delve into the wonder box and answer or at least examine the questions we created the week before..

Susan Frawley

Coffee hour: Joan Davis

Usher: Shelley Baxter

President's Message

My last President's Message- please forgive the length

Many tend look to the past for hope and comfort. We remember the good old days and forget that they weren't so good. This is how we protect ourselves and let hurts go. And that can be a good thing. But sometimes the bad things are as important to remember as the good. The key is to not hold them too tightly. And sometimes, we need to realize that we are products of the environment we grew up in, that we are complicated and don't always do the right thing. Times change, and so do we, or we perish. Many of us have looked back at some of our heroes recently, and realized that they weren't perfect. We look at things that happened in the past in the context of today, and wonder how anyone could have acted the way that they did. I think of someone like Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He was one of our best presidents, a hero to my parents and to many of their generation. He did a lot for this country-he harmed a lot of people as well. He authorized imprisonment of Japanese Americans in internment camps during World War II. How could anyone have thought that that was a good idea? And yet, we see the same stuff happening today to immigrants and people of color. Chants of lock them up or build that wall reverberate around our country.

FDR also did great things for us as well-social security, Medicare, guiding us through a terrible war. One of his most famous pronouncements, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself", gave hope to millions of Americans- yet he gave in to the fears of some Americans, when he rounded up Japanese Americans and treated them like the enemy. I am sure that there was some political advantage to doing so at the time-but it still was wrong.

Where did this irrational fear of The Other come from? I see it propagated every day in how we teach our children - they shouldn't talk to strangers and we use terms like stranger danger. What is a stranger? Someone who does not look like you. Yes we want to protect them, but we are teaching them how to fear instead of how to be safe. We forget that more often than not, it is not the stranger who is going to be the danger-it is the person you think you know. Because Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, should we have assumed every Japanese American was a spy? Because some Muslims were behind 9/11, are we correct to assume all Muslims are our enemies? Because some immigrants commit crimes, should we assume they all commit crimes?

FDR was also known for his fireside chats, through which he rallied Americans and gave hope with his words (if you weren't Japanese American, that is). Hope was necessary for the challenges that were facing

the world-he needed to get us out of our isolationist stance in order to stop the menace that Germany, Italy and Japan posed to Europe, Asia and North America. When a people become hopeless from the circumstances that surround them, they lose the sense that anything they do or believe matters; they think that nothing can make a difference in their circumstances. And no one wants to acknowledge that their own inattention or greed could have led to the hopeless situation they are in. So people turn to blaming others, looking for scapegoats. When we are hopeless, we fear the other instead of having compassion and reaching out a helping hand. This was how Hitler and Mussolini got their countrymen to go along with their horrible plans. This is what is happening today in the anti immigrant sentiments that we see all over the world. When we are hopeless, we cease to recognize ourselves in the faces of others and we cease to build the community that is necessary to help everyone to succeed. We think that if we give to others in need, we will not have enough for ourselves. We become suicide bombers, we drive cars into crowds, we buy guns and kill people we blame for our troubles, even though we have never met those people. Or maybe worse than all of that, we stand by and do nothing when others do those things, thinking there is nothing we can do.

When my dog, Pablo, and I go for our daily walks, I play a little game I call Giving Hope Getting Hope. I smile and wave to every passing car and count what percentage of people wave back. I win when I get more than 50 % return waves. It's a variation on a game we played as kids. I have learned a lot from this game. #1-Most older men wave back. They are confident. #2 – People whom I estimate to be between 15-35 years of age tend not to wave back, mainly because they are looking at an electronic device or are really working hard to avoid eye contact. They are not confident. # 3- Little kids almost always wave back- until their parents tell them to cut it out. They have not yet learned to be suspicious and afraid. #4- Women wave back if they are alone but not when there are others in the car-I haven't a good explanation for that. #5 -Time of day and day of the week affect the number of return waves-mornings and weekends are best. #6 -Weather has a huge influence-more waves when sunny and warm.

So what does this have to do with giving and getting hope? Well, I believe that everything we do, even the smallest interactions, influence those around us. Think about when you have had a bad day at work and have to stop at the store to pick up milk on the way home, even though all you want to do is just go home. But you know that you will want that milk for your coffee in the morning, so you take a detour to the grocery store and get your milk. Now, you only planned on the milk, so you did not grab a cart or basket on the way into the store. Then you remember that you also need

toilet paper or you will be very sorry, so you grab that and maybe a few other things you did not intend to get. You now have your arms full. You are hurriedly moving through the crowded store to check out, when someone bumps into you causing you to drop everything you are carrying. Scenario #1-The person looks at you like you are a jerk and keeps walking or may even tell you to watch where you are going. You get mad and may even say some not so nice things out loud. Result? You feel worse than you did before. Scenario # 2- The person who bumped you stops and apologizes and helps you pick up your stuff. Better-your mood may improve a bit. Scenario # 3 -They apologize, help you pick things up and offer the fact that they just got some really bad news and weren't paying attention. Now you are comforting them and telling them no big deal, I hope it works out OK. You feel really good about yourself and realize your bad day wasn't so bad. A total stranger in the store has made you feel better about yourself simply by being open about their shortcomings and problems. So therefore, I believe that when a silly woman in a ridiculous hat walking a hysterically funny looking munchkin of a dog smiles and waves-well that could change your whole day. You might even smile. And that might make you more likely to pass that smile along and change someone else's day.

So, once again, I would like to say that we can all make a difference in this world and it does not have to be a grand gesture. Visiting someone in the hospital when they feel vulnerable and alone gives that person a sense of community. They are not forgotten as they suffer. Attending church and having a meaningful conversation at coffee hour, hearing someone else's point of view, being in relationship matters. The people who make real change in the world are those who get up every day and do their best to face the world cheerfully, with deep thought and love for others, who help and don't tweet about it or post it on Facebook. The people who take the time to vote their conscience in every election year after year, the people who plant milkweed to feed the Monarch butterflies, the people who bend down to pick up a piece of trash that they did not drop and dispose of it properly, the people who turn down the thermostat in the winter and wear a sweater to cut down on greenhouse gases, the people who deny themselves something they want and give that money to a charity instead, the people who wave and smile and say hello even though they don't know you-these are the real change makers. They are the givers of hope. These people are you and me. Let us share our hope and not mourn or regret the past, but look to the future and how we can all make it better, one little wave at a time, building community everywhere we go.

I believe in you,
Teresa Labuszewski

New Members

Later this spring we will be welcoming new members into the congregation. If you wish to become a member of FUUN, please contact our President, Teresa Labuszewski, at doctordrtl@verizon.net, or talk to her in church.

Announcements

ANNUAL Congregational Meeting

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

Social Justice Movies

May 5 - TED talk Birth certificate adoptee justice

BAZAAR news May

Pots are available for the plant sale. If you need help with plants, let me know please.

If you have things to donate please talk to me before you bring them in. We need to schedule a time.

We will be washing dishes and polishing our silver on May 12th after coffee hour.

We need basket auction items.

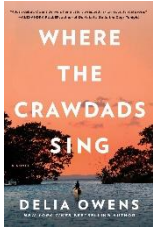
Please start asking people you see regularly (chiropractors, stylist, massage therapist, mechanic) if they would like to donate to BAZAAR...you'd be surprised at what you get.

Maybe you have something to offer? Rob and I are going to donate an afternoon sail on our boat....how about you?



Thanx &
Marie
Call or text
716-550-1438

Book Group



Our next book group meeting will be on Wednesday, June 19th, from 4:30 to 5:30. We are going to read: Where the Crawdaddies Sing by D. Owens. This book is available on line from Kindle and at the library.

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>

UUA

Brilliant Collisions

“The train jerks to a halt, and as I get out at Oxford Circus, Stewart gets out with me. We look at each other, laugh, and make the standard remark about it being a small world. But this is the brilliant collision: one train later and it might all have turned out differently.”
—Andy Summers, guitarist for [The Police](#)

My six-year-old son loves owls. In that charming six-year-old way, that love carries into everything.

We hoot at each other in greeting. We’ve been to the local nature center’s Owl Prowl, where he got to meet some birds in person. Last Christmas was one big Owlalooza: a huge wall decal with owls, owl sheets, an owl umbrella, even a personalized owl doormat for outside of his room. Recently we had a dance party after stumbling upon a video by the band Owl City.

The whole thing started by accident. When he was two, I went to a weeklong conference, which is equivalent to a month in toddler time. At the end of the week, shortly before my ride to the airport was due to arrive, I realized that I hadn’t gotten him a promised souvenir. I raced to the retreat center’s gift shop.

Most of what I found fell into two categories: “Not intended for a young child” or “Are you kidding me with that price?” Eventually, I happened upon the stuffed animals, including a great horned owl that wouldn’t break the bank. With the clock ticking down, I hurriedly searched for one whose beak wasn’t completely smushed, tried to calm my anxiety in line at the cash register, and ran back to the shuttle stop before my credit card had even cooled down.

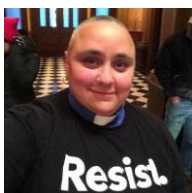
That’s how Owlie entered the picture—and transformed our family.

We can’t always predict which choices will wind up having a huge impact on us, whether it’s bringing home a stuffed animal or taking a particular train to Oxford Circus. For Andy Summers, running into Stewart Copeland in 1977 was the “brilliant collision” that took The Police to the height of rock stardom and altered the trajectory of their lives. Given how profoundly I love the band’s music even thirty-five years after I first immersed myself in it, that chance meeting changed my life as well.

Will my son’s interest in owls will wane along with his interest in stuffies, or has he begun a lifelong fascination with them? There’s no way to know. Whatever his future holds, I hope he’ll invest it with a love that carries into everything.

Prayer

Pervasive Love, thank you for the gifts of the unexpected, for the chance encounters that enrich our lives out of all proportion. Help us make decisions, however small, based in compassion and integrity. And when we reach a pivot point, be the wind at our back guiding us towards the highest good. Amen and blessed be.



Rev. Lindasusan V. Ulrich is a minister, writer, musician, and activist dedicated to a vision of radical inclusion in both language and action. She currently serves as Assistant Minister at the First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor.

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Facilities available for Wedding Services,
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"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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May 2019

