

April 2011 **POWERLINE**

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara



Announcement: Annual Meeting

The Board has set the Annual Meeting for May 15, 2011 at 12:30pm in the Sanctuary.

Sunday Services (11:00am)

Worship Associate Ed McGreevy and Caring Circle Associate Peter Diachun

April 3: *The Welcoming Rooms* – Rev. Theresa Kime

We continue our exploration of our liberal religious understandings and foundations, based on the book *A House for Hope: The Promise of Progressive Religion for the 21st Century* by John Buerhens and Rebecca Parker. Come to explore the next part of our own House for Hope: what is the welcome we offer and how might we nurture it. Chalice group meets after the service for contemplative reflection on the sermon topic.

April 10: *A 'Sense' of Community!* – Mehdi Kizilbash - UUAmherst

A community is so much more than a grouping of persons. It is subtle, elusive and amorphous! Still we need it to survive and grow. I'd like to share some thoughts and feelings with you.

April 17: *Between May Sarton and Yoko Ono* – Rev. Theresa Kime

May Sarton, a UU known for her journal writing and poems, and Yoko Ono, artist and wife of Beatle John Lennon, seem to have led very different kinds of lives: one solitary, the other very much in the public eye. What might be the points of connection between the two and what might their lives have to teach us? Today, we'll consider those questions.

April 24: *You Are A... What?* – Rev. Don Reidell

Who knows, maybe you are too.

Minister's Weekend Schedule

Friday, April 1:

6:00pm: April Fools Day!: First Friday Potluck and Fun (no foolin')

Saturday, April 2:

10:00am-noon: *Forgiveness: Freeing the Heart*

A spiritual exploration class at the Lewiston Public Library.

Lunch after class at Syros for all who wish

2:00-4:00pm: Calls and visits

4:30pm: Meeting about memorial service for Lucile McElwain

Saturday, April 16:

10:00-11:00am: Worship Team/Committee

11:00am-noon: Caring Circle

1:30-3:00pm: Planning for Growth Team

Sunday, April 17:

1:00-3:00pm: Board meeting in the Founders Room

Community Outreach Class

“FORGIVENESS: FREEING THE HEART” is a spiritual exploration class led by Rev. Terry. It is our annual community outreach class, held at the Lewiston Public Library on Saturday, April 2, 10:00am-noon. Invite friends, neighbors, coworkers to consider this topic with us.

What is forgiveness? What might it mean to forgive ourselves, to forgive others? How might we use forgiveness in our daily lives? Come to explore this challenging topic. Lunch after class at Syros for all who wish.

FROM YOUR MINISTER:

April, and calendar-wise we are into spring. Hooray! It is good to look forward to more green and color in our landscapes!

Perhaps it's also a time to take a clue from nature around us and ask ourselves: Where is the green-- the growing edge in my own life? What am I uncomfortable with and how might I work with that discomfort (develop patience, understanding, compassion, forgiveness...)? What am I learning that I'm loving, something I'm intrigued by, curious about, maybe something I've always wanted to try but haven't yet? Where is the growing--the green-- in my life?

Where is the color in my life? What brightness do I cultivate? What interests have I neglected that I may wish to renew? How am I doing with commitment to a spiritual discipline (prayer, walks, runs, meditation...)? Have I sang, danced, read poems aloud, breathed deeply the fresh air, hugged someone, offered or joined others for a meal lately? Where is the color in my life?

May our lives blossom with the spring, as we continue to walk together, connected in heart and mind to one another and our UU faith that sustains and challenges.

Wishing you every blessing this season,

Terry

THANK YOU! The wind chimes the congregation gave me as a housewarming gift are wonderful! They are not only beautiful but sound lovely as well. It's a great gift and it was very thoughtful. I shall think of you all when I sit on my deck and the wind gently blows and the chimes softly sound. Big hug of gratitude to you all!

Terry

President's Corner

Our small church is a major part of the lives of many of its members. For many of us it functions as our extended family. For some of us it is the place we obtain the intellectual stimulation and enrichment we need. We use it as a safe refuge where our different and often unpopular individual beliefs are not only allowed, but welcomed and encouraged. Most of us realize that it is the only such place available for us. For all these reasons, and more, it is very important that every member of this church have a real understanding of our future.

Three years ago we decided as a congregation to contract with Rev. Terry to provide ministerial services on a part time basis. We agreed to pay her the expected and prevailing compensation for this work even though it would require us to spend a substantial part of our savings every year. She has been very well received by the congregation. She has led us to some new activities. Her ministry with us has been successful. Although there is encouraging growth, we have not grown sufficiently to reduce or eliminate the financial shortfall each year she has been with us.

We pride ourselves as being objective and reasonable and in seeking truth. The real future of the church is that we cannot financially sustain even a part time contract minister unless we nearly double our income. So far we have no indication of being on the path of doing this. As I write this we are in the middle of our Annual Pledge Drive. When you read it, it will be almost complete. Maybe it will provide such an indication. I hope so, but until it happens, it is, at best, only a hope. Maybe our appeal for additional fund raising ideas will yield realistic, possible proposals. Maybe something else will happen to give us such an indication that we are on the path to doubling our income. Unfortunately we can not depend on these maybes.

This year, as in the last three years, the congregation will be faced with deciding to continue our contract with Terry for another year and again adopting a budget substantially funded by our savings. Everyone must understand this if we are to continue another year. As all of you know we have engaged in a series of meetings to consider each budget item line by line. The results of these meetings are available to everyone. This effort has not been effective in leading all members to understand our financial situation. As a result the Board has adopted a Policy/Procedure which will be followed this year to develop a proposed budget based on requests for expenditures and expected income and expenses similar to what has been done in recent years and assuming we continue to operate as we are now.

In order to satisfy myself that I have fulfilled the responsibility of president I will employ several methods to bring awareness of our financial situation and future to all before the Annual Meeting on May 15. These methods include meeting with individuals, small groups or the entire congregation. I plan to continue these conversations until I am confident that every member has been exposed to the facts that enable each one to make a responsible decision. I will try not to be irritating, but I am determined. You elected me as your president. Let me know when you have had enough.

Additions to the Policy Manual

At the last Board Meeting three new policies were added the Policy Manual. These outline the procedure to develop an annual budget to be recommended to the congregation and also cover two important components which are part of the budget — the Cost of Ministry and the Denominational Cost together with payments to other groups with which the church is affiliated. At this same meeting the Board adopted as a policy what had been the practice by a resolution authorizing the President or Treasurer to rent the building to new tenants subject to Board approval.

You can read these newly adopted policies in the updated Policy Manual on our website. They are Nos. 16, 17 and 18. Policy No. 15 is about the rental of the building. The direct link to the Policy Manual is: www.firstuunf.org/files/PPManualMarch2011.doc

Delegates to Annual SLD or UUA General Assembly

Both the SLD and UUA GA meetings are good opportunities to learn about our denomination. Imagine being in a hall with 1000 other UUs! Both of these have workshops to participate in, entertainment, worship, and educational activities and some business meetings. If anyone is interested in attending either the SLD Meeting April 29-30 in Ithaca or the UUA General Assembly in Charlotte, NC June 22-26 please speak with Peter or Rev. Terry. If you decide to attend you could become an official delegate from our church with full voting privileges.

Annual Meeting

The Board has set the Annual Meeting for May 15, 2011 at 12:30pm in the Sanctuary. Mark your calendars. Every member is encouraged to attend and participate. A

President-Elect will be elected together with a new Board member. Part of the business will be considering extending the Minister's contract by one year and our budget for next year. We will also be deciding our future role in NOAH. We intend to have the Annual Reports available the week before the Annual Meeting. This contains reports from committees, the President, and the Minister. It will also have the proposed budget and possibly some alternative. The agenda for the Annual Meeting and a list of members who can vote will be included.

Peter Diachun

Financial Reports

The following is a condensed summary of the financial progress and condition of the church. Complete financial reports are available to any member on a one time or monthly basis. Request them from any Board member:

	Church Year 8/1/2010 - 7/31/2011 Actual Year to Date at the end of the month of February	Church Year 8/1/2010 - 7/31/2011 Budget for the Full Year
Income from Operations	\$22,683	\$39,300
Income from Investments	\$2,660	\$4,000
Total Income	\$25,343	\$43,300
Expenses from Operations	\$34,126	\$66,100
Capital Contributions Less Capital Expenses	-\$265	-\$4,000
Change in Money Assets for the Year	-\$9,048	-\$26,800
Total Money Assets as of February 2011	\$107,358	

Board of Trustees News

March 20 Board meeting highlights

The Board reviewed the recent potluck with another church as well as our own first Friday potluck dinners. A policy regarding political campaigning and materials at the church was discussed. The *Men, Women and Margaret Fuller* presentation was a big success, netting \$400 to the church. Thanks to those who worked hard to make it a success. The budget meetings/deliberations and line by line comments were reviewed. A new budget development guideline policy was approved to help future committees. The Board is looking for people to attend the week-long General Assembly beginning June 24 and/or the St. Lawrence District meeting in April. *Bike and Build* was approved to use our building for one night. A process for production of the Annual Report was discussed as well as issuing it before the day of the meeting.

Next Board meeting – Sunday, April 17 at 1:00pm. All members are welcome.

Caring Circle

Joy Rowlinson, Peter Diachun, Marge Gillies, Yvonne Stocker and Judy Bongiovanni are members of our Caring Circle. This is more than just visitation. It includes specific help where needed, material help such as food, canes or other items, services such as transportation or caretaker respite, referral to community resources, as well as things designed to raise the spirit of our members and draw us closer together through better understanding.

Obviously these people cannot do it all alone, but will try to coordinate efforts on behalf of the whole church. They will be contacting and involving people to help in many ways. Please understand this is for each and every one of us. Feel free to contact a member of the committee when you have a need or a suggestion. Information given to committee members will be kept confidential unless otherwise specifically agreed. Right now we are looking for volunteers to make phone calls. Please see a member of the committee if you are willing or have questions.

Judy

Facebook

The church is now on the social network, Facebook. If you have a Facebook account, search for First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara. To receive the information on our Facebook page you must select "Like." We update the page with each week's service and social events. There are pictures of our last potluck, movie nite, and the children's activities.

If you are unsure, I can assist you. I also can show you the Facebook page during coffee hour if you do not have an account.

Every time I update the status it will be sent to everyone who has "liked" the page. If anyone comments or likes the status it will be sent to all of their friends on Facebook and so on. Information is shared exponentially.

Ask me any questions! Call or text 523-8103, e-mail ericakopp@yahoo.com or message me on Facebook.

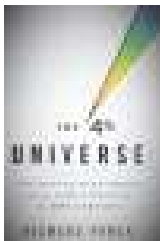
Erica

Adult Reflection and Exploration

We continue to exchange ideas and opinions on a wide variety of issues (sometimes in one class). We meet at 9:45am Sundays in the Founders Room. Come and join us and share your wisdom and humor. See Judy Bongiovanni for details.

Judy

Book Discussion Group



There has been a change. For the discussion April 12 we will be reading *The 4 Percent Universe: Dark Matter, Dark Energy, and the Race to Discover the Rest of Reality* by Richard Panek. The title says it all and although it sounds a bit intimidating, it really is written in an accessible manner.

Judy

UU St Lawrence District

Upcoming Events:

- *The Central East Regional Group (CERG) Webinars (1-2hour online class)
Topics such as Safety, Leadership, Youth Ministry... <http://cerquua.org/calendars/cergwebinars.html>
- *St. Lawrence District Assembly April 29 - 30, Ithaca
Flyer - <http://www.sld.uua.org/newsletters/2010/da2011flyer.pdf>
- *UULTI on the Lake Leadership Team Institute July 24 - 27, Canandaigua
<http://cerquua.org/uulti.html>

Yvonne

April Birthdays

- 2nd – Bryce Malluma-Kopp
- 4th – Ruth Padlog
- 5th – Marian McAlpine
- 6th – Rosemary Sweetman
- 20th – Peter Diachun
- 22nd – Yvonne Stocker
- 29th – Frances Manly
- 29th – Victoria Christensen

Outreach

April's Outreach recipient is the local chapter of the American Red Cross. We were initially going to ask that our donation be used for aid to Japan but our March donation, of \$248 went to the UUSC for this purpose. We will request that the donation in April to the Red Cross be used locally to help people in times of distress. This collection will be from our plate on Sunday, April 17.

Social

* April Potluck

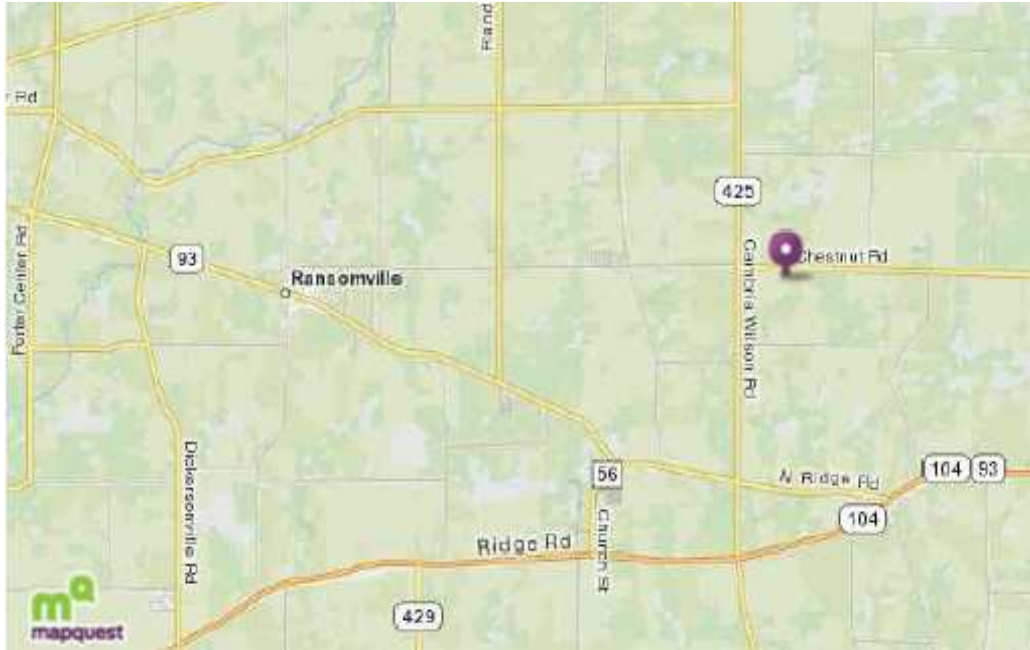
We will celebrate April Fools with foolish things like no dessert!!! Bring your favorite foolish dish to share on April 1 at 6:00pm in Unity Hall. Following the dinner we will do FUUN things like games. Any questions – ask Marie.

*Drum Circle

We are drumming again. Carolyn Zimmermann will lead the drum circle on April 16 at 4:30pm in Unity Hall. It will last about one hour followed by coffee and cookies. There is no need for talent, rhythm or experience or even a drum! You may bring your own drum or use one of ours. Children are welcome. Visit Carolyn's website drum4health.net. For more information contact Erica 523-8103. We ask for a \$5 donation.

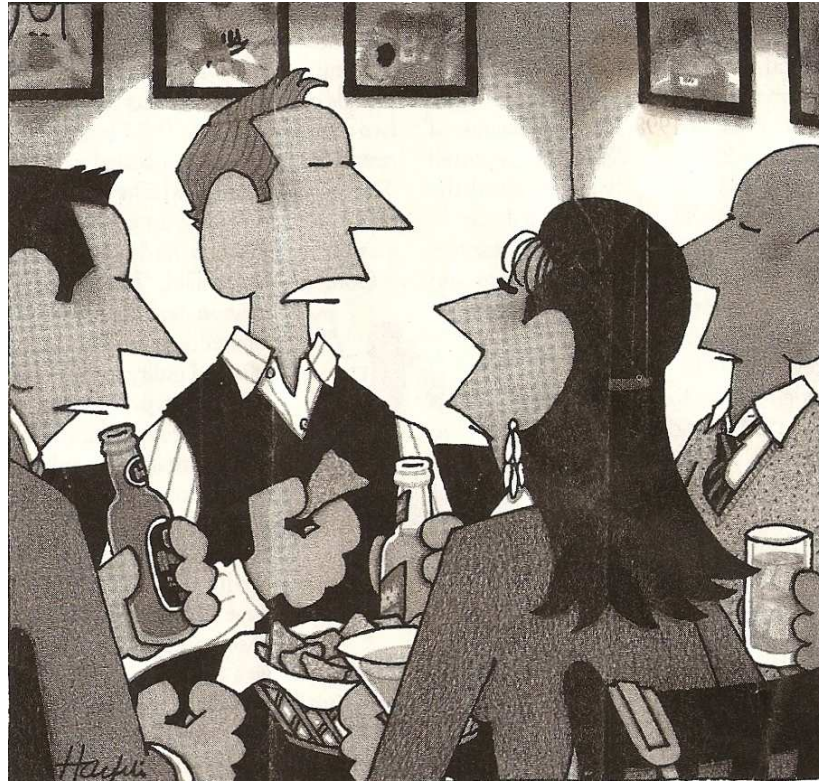
*Extra Social Event

On both Sunday, April 3 and Sunday, April 17, people are planning to partake of the brunch offered at the South Wilson Fire Hall. This is a wonderful meal and a bit of Americana at its best. We usually try to get there at 9:00am so that we are back in Niagara Falls in plenty of time for the church service. The cost is between \$8 - \$10 for adults and less for children. Plan to join us if you can. The Fire Hall is on Chestnut Rd. off Rte.425 outside of Wilson. If you need directions call Betsy - 754-2830.



South Wilson Fire Hall 4194 Chestnut Rd Wilson, NY 14172

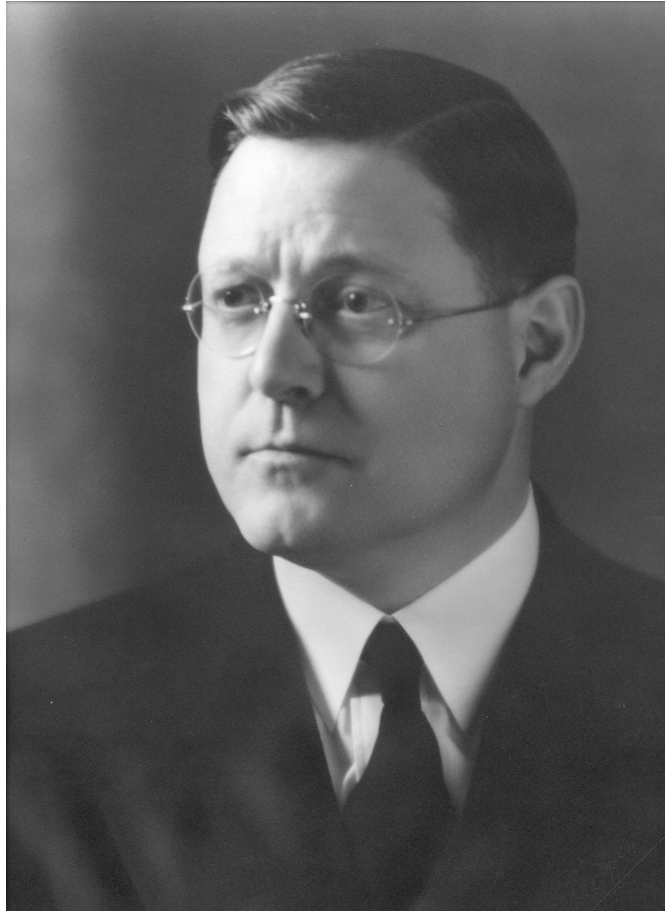
Search for Truth and Meaning?



I'm in the market for an easier religion.

The New Yorker

From the Archives Closet
The first minister



The first settled minister of First Unitarian Church of Niagara Falls, the Rev. Dr. Orville Bruce Swift, was not a member of the Unitarian clergy when he was hired. A Wisconsin native, Rev. Swift moved east to Palisades Park, NJ, near New York, in 1913, apparently joining a Congregationalist Church. He was 27 years old at the time. Earning a Bachelors Degree in Divinity from Union Theological Seminary in 1915, he proceeded to the ministry of the First Congregational Church in Middletown, NY from 1917 until December 1918, according to his "application for admission into the Fellowship of the Unitarian Ministry." This undated document indicates he was a probationer by February 14, 1920 and a full member six months later.

Letters exist from Rev. Swift to J. Allen Johnson, the prime mover of the Niagara Falls church, even before the church was officially established. On March 24, 1920, the minister advised that the next Sunday's sermon would be "Christian theory and Christian practice." He and Mrs. Swift were "working like Trojans" to prepare their household furnishings for shipping upstate to Niagara Falls, and he sent regards "to Mrs. Johnson and the kiddies."

On stationery headed "The Manse, Middletown, NY," Rev. Swift noted on April 12, 1920 that that Sunday's sermon was to be "The invisible factor in human affairs." News of these early Unitarian services was not consistently advertised in the Niagara Falls Gazette's Church column which ran on Saturday. A few sample listings that were advertised that spring:

April 3 Easter. Rev. OB Swift, minister—services tomorrow 11:00am, Grey and Trigg Hall. (NB— Recall that the present church edifice was not constructed until 1922.) Subject of the day is immortality and the meaning of faith therein. This church has no creed. It invites all to its services and membership—people who have lost interest in the dogmas, tradition and symbolism of historic Christianity but who still believe in that simple and practical religion which is—love of God and service to man.

April 10 Service every Sunday 11am, Grey and Trigg Hall. Commercial idea in religion. This church has a vital message. All are invited.

April 23 All persons worshipping elsewhere invited to our services.

May 13 First Unitarian Church Orville B. Swift, manager [sic] The minister has taken up his residence at 536 Fifth St. where he may be found by persons desiring interviews or his professional services.

The First Unitarian Church of Niagara Falls was officially organized on October 17, 1920, so Rev. Swift had been broken in beforehand.

(to be continued)

Janet

UU Niagara Activities – April 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 6p April Fools Potluck - Game Night - no Foolin'	2 10a Forgiveness Freeing the Heart
3 11a Sunday Service	4 6:30p Habitat for 5 Humanity		6	7	8	9 9a Saturday Work Party
10 9:45a Adult RE 11a Sunday Service	11	12 7p Book Discussion Group	13	14	15	16 10a Worship Team 11a Caring Circle 1:30p Planning for Growth Team 4:30p Drum Circle
17 11a Sunday Service 1p Board Meeting 1:30p Habitat Dedication	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 9:45a Adult RE 11a Sunday Service	25	26	27	28	29	30

If you have comments, arguments or articles you may submit them to the editor either electronically yvonnestocker@gmail.com or by mail 4118 Bell Street, Niagara Falls NY 14305-1606 or phone 716 278-0176

Yvonne