

December 2011 **POWERLINE**
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara



Sunday Services (11:00am)

Theme: **Witness**

Worship Associate Tina Galyn and Caring Circle Associate Yvonne Stocker

December 4: *Acting on Our Faith* – Rev. Theresa Kime

Most faith traditions teach the importance of daily engaging its values and teachings in our lives. How does our UU tradition encourage us in this area, as a witness to our faith?

Potluck Lunch following service – bring a dish to pass and share fellowship and food.

December 11: *End of Life* – Carol Rizzolo – author of *Illuminating the Twilight*

The time of dying has been imagined and mythologized from the earliest extant written records. We will explore the ways in which this incredibly rich wisdom literature can help us to ease the time of dying for ourselves and for those we love.

December 18: *Witnessing to Compassion* – Rev. Theresa Kime

In the midst of the holy days of this time, perhaps it is a good time to consider compassion, and how we provide it witness during these often hectic, and sometimes lonely, times.

December 24 7:00pm Christmas Eve service *O Holy Night* – Rev. Theresa Kime

Join us for a special evening candlelight service as we recall the ancient words of the Christian story of Jesus' birth, sing carols, and consider the continuing miracle and promise of children.

Share mulled cider and Christmas baking treats after the service.

December 25: No Service

Our December 11 Speaker, Carol Rizzolo will Speak at UU Amherst



Illuminating the Twilight

A discussion of the landscape of the dying 21st century America

- Saturday, December 10 at 1:00 – 3:00pm
- Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst,
6320 Main Street, Williamsville NY 14221

This talk will include discussion of the landscape of the dying as seen through the lens of the major religious traditions practiced in 21st century America in addition to the unique nature of end of life dreaming that has been noted and recorded by our human ancestors for thousands of years.

Minister's Weekend Schedule

Saturday, December 3:

11:00am-Noon: Caring Circle meeting

Noon-1:00pm: Lunch at Café Lola's on Third St. for all who wish to join

1:30-2:30pm: FUUtutes Committee meeting

2:30-3:30pm: Stewardship Committee meeting

Sunday, December 4:

Noon-2:00pm: Potluck Lunch

Saturday, December 17:

Open for appointments. Please contact Rev. Terry by email tesskime@gmail.com or phone 716 467 2074 before Friday, December 16 if you would like to schedule an appointment.

Sunday, December 18:

12:30-2:30pm: Board Meeting

Saturday, December 24:

8:00pm Social Gathering after Carol Service

FROM YOUR MINISTER:

Our spiritual theme for the month of December is "witness." Many of the holy days of this time ask us to consider the miracles around us. They offer us the chance to consider the many ways we encounter these: in the birth and potential of a child; in the light--the warmth and connection-- given from our trust in, and connection to the Holy; in the beauty and promise of nature, with its cycles and seasons that hold us steady.

Maybe this month is the time for each of us to reflect on the miracles we encounter every day: our loved ones, human and animal; the amazing display of nature; food on our table; a place to call home; the fact that we are alive, with the chance to offer good humor, goodwill, and caring to one another, and so many more. What miracles might you marvel at, and witness to this month?

And as witness to all we've been given and the miracles that abound, maybe this month, as we reach out to others with kindness and understanding, especially those who are strangers to us, we may bring closer into being peace on earth and blessing to all.

With gratitude for the wonderful miracle of each of you,

Terry

President's Corner

Being the president for a few months now, I have noticed many of our members who work endlessly for our congregation. So many people have many ideas for our church. There are so many people in our congregation who want to give. I look forward to the possibilities.

I have been lucky to work with such a creative Board of Trustees. We try not to have too much fun. So NO more laughter in meetings, I have learned how to use that gavel!

My work on the FUUtutes committee and CRE keeps me busy!

Erica

Board of Trustees News

November 20 Board meeting highlights

The Board gave its blessing to Peter Diachun's "Prisoners are People Too" event on December 1 from 6:30-8:30pm. Those of you who were present for Karima Amin's service at our church several weeks ago know we are in for an informative evening. I

hope she uses her beautiful stories to illustrate some of her points, as she is the main presenter.

We also revisited the Poetry Out Loud effort. We started too late in the year to actually participate in that event. However, we are really interested in working with the youth in Niagara County. Young people are our future and we all decided we need to nourish them, especially in light of Karen Labosky's thoughts at the FUUtues presentation today after coffee hour. So we are putting together a team to look into hosting our own poetry/rap event. Buffalo just had a poetry/rap slam where young people were invited to submit original work and perform it. We can look into how they moved forward. We would really like to get the entire congregation involved. We'll be helping others, but also helping ourselves. Young people in the church are a must if we are to have a future. This is one way to get them and their families to walk through our door and if they like what they see, maybe return for services. You'll be hearing more about this in the next few weeks. We are looking for people who would like to plan, organize, act as judges for the contest, help publicize it and see if we can scare up some local businesses who might donate gift certificates as prizes. Many hands make the work load lighter and quite frankly, make it more fun.

We also received an invitation from the St. Lawrence and Ohio Meadville Districts of the UUA to participate in a series of six meetings between January and May called Healthy Congregations / Smart Church Workshop. The cost is \$45 per person for the series. Each person is responsible for their own lunch. The first meeting is at the UU Church in Buffalo in mid-January. We need to let them know by December 1, so we will be announcing more details at church next week as we get them. Please consider this investment of your time as an investment in the church.

The Board also authorized Yvonne Stocker to explore the Church's participation in the 2012 Stand Against Racism event. We have participated in the past with great success.

We are exploring the idea that Betsy and Peter Diachun have proposed for a paid church administrator. Our major concern is that we get the jobs done that need to be done in a timely manner and that we do so in a fiscally responsible fashion. At the present time, the Board does not feel we are in a position to authorize such a paid position. We know that Betsy and Peter shoulder a very large amount of the day to day work of the church. We all take for granted that the stuff gets done - but we really don't have little fairies that answer the phones and take care of the mail and many other jobs. We are going to explore the work list further and will probably group some of the similar types of tasks together and ask people to be responsible for them. This is part of stewardship-the ministry of maintaining the church through our volunteering our time as well as our money. If you believe as we do that a liberal religious presence in the Niagara region is important, then we need to nourish the church and recommit our time and effort. That is just what the stewardship committee has as its goal. Marie Howard, Rev. Terry and I are planning both joyful and meaningful ways to ask you all to renew your commitment to the church. On my way to church today, I saw an unusual bumper sticker. It said, "God does not exclude, He includes." I would like to borrow that and say my religion does not exclude, it includes. We will be asking you to stretch yourselves and help us think of more ways to strengthen the religious community we already have and to enlarge that community to include even more people. There are more UU's out there yearning for a home. We just have to help them find it with us.

Next Board meeting – Sunday, December 18 at 12:30pm. All members are welcome.

Teresa

Outreach

For our Outreach collection on December 18 we will give money toward the gifts we are purchasing for our chosen family from Community Missions. Marie will purchase items and they'll be delivered by December 16 so we will be refilling the church coffers with your donations. Our family consists of a Mom and three girls, 7,13 and15. We have been asked to include a gift card for groceries and the Mission will send a turkey. If you want to work with Marie buying or obtaining items for the family I know she'd be delighted with your help. Contact her at 716 745-7149. We have a list of their wishes.

Betsy

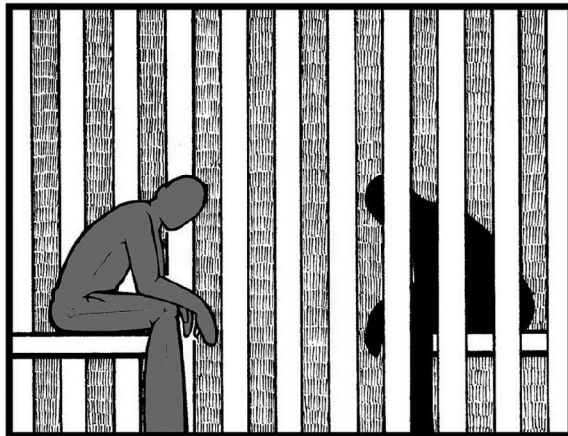
Financial Reports

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.

Summary financial report for October of the Church fiscal year ending July 31, 2012.

	Church Year 8/1/2011 - 7/31/2012 Actual Year to Date on October 31, 2012	Church Year 8/1/2011 - 7/31/2012 Budget for the Full Year
Income from Operations	\$9,735	\$39,800
Income from Investments	\$27	\$3,400
Total Income	\$9,762	\$43,200
Expenses from Operations	\$12,958	\$64,350
Capital Contributions Less Capital Expenses	\$0	-\$1,000
Change in Money Assets for the Year	-\$3,197	-\$22,150
Total Money Assets October 31, 2011	\$97,924	

Niagara Falls Unitarians feature Karima Amin on “Prisoners are people too”



Many of us neglect a population of people who are often out of sight and out of mind—incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals.

Karima Amin, founder of “Prisoners are People Too,” discusses prisoners’ issues at 6:30pm, Thursday, December 1 in the church sanctuary. All community members are invited.

Her talk emphasizes the humanity of both the victim and the offender. Previous prisoners will also speak. Several types of action will be discussed with opportunities to become involved.

A retired English teacher in the Buffalo public schools and well-known story teller, Ms. Amin founded "Prisoners are People Too" in 2005. The program was established to enhance the general public's awareness of prison issues and has grown to include networking, referrals, community building, and action organizing.

"Prisoners' families are here in our community, and previous prisoners are our neighbors," she points out. With 2.3 million people behind bars, America incarcerates more people than any other nation in the world. The web site of "Prisoners are People Too" is www.prp2.org

Coffee will be served following the program. For further information call 716 754 2830 or email peter.diachun@gmail.com

FUUTures Committee

The FUUN FUUTures committee, consisting of Peter, Erica and Ed Tormay, held the first of three planned conversations with our congregation Sunday, November 20. The focus of this conversation was on the past of the church and guided by three questions from the committee. First we asked members to think of a time when the church was "flourishing and healthy." Then we asked folks to think of a time when the church faced hardship. Finally we thought back to a time when the church's focus was connected to the community outside our church walls.

Responses were rich and varied - not surprising! What emerged from this nearly one hour conversation was the strong sense of community enjoyed by all members in times of greater numbers and much activity, as well as in times of challenge and hardship. This was also the case - not surprisingly - during those periods when we enjoyed more active participation in the community at large.

It seemed to us that members were truly galvanized in working together whether in weekly bingo, UUNEX, standing against racism, protesting the Vietnam war, the list goes on and on. Our next conversation will happen on Sunday, December 4 and will zero in on the here and now in the life of our church. The date and focus for our third meeting is yet to be determined. We wish to thank everyone who attended and for their input! Ours is an open and ongoing conversation! Please tell or write your thoughts and feelings to committee members at any time between now and December 4!

Caring Circle

It's not just the elves that are busy this time of year. The Caring Circle is also spreading joy and we all wish each of you the best of the holiday season. If you have a concern or know of a need, please contact a member of our Caring Circle. The members are Peter Diachun, Marge Gillies, Joy Rowlinson, Nan Simon, Yvonne Stocker, and Judy Bongiovanni.

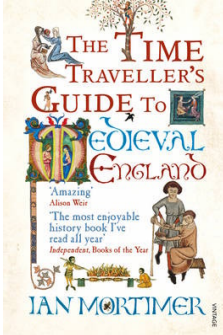
Adult Reflection and Exploration

We gather in the Founders Room on Sunday mornings at 9:45 am. and solve many of the world's problems. The only requirement is interest. We are a friendly group so think about joining us. We are currently re-evaluating our group and whether or not to continue as is, cancel for a while, make changes in time or place of meeting. Bring your thoughts.

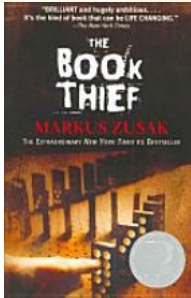
Judy

Book Discussion Group

The mild-mannered members of this group have joined the occupy movement and canceled the December meeting. The facilitator wisely kept quiet. We will resume our discussion on January 10, 2012 in the Founders Room at 7:00pm. We will discuss the following books:



First, *A Time Traveler's Guide to Medieval England: a Handbook for Visitors to the Fourteenth Century* by Ian Mortimer 352 pages. Mortimer addresses every aspect of medieval life from the mundane to the bizarre and gets to the heart of a different time zone.



Second *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak 576 pages. Death narrates this WWII era story of nine year old Liesel who is taken to live with a foster family. Liesel steals books and the mayor's reclusive wife lets her.

Everyone is welcome and we can always appreciate another point of view.

Judy

Children's Religious Education

We have had many new little ones in our religious exploration. Bryce and Madison are the older kids and love helping the little ones. Madison and Bryce are now the "teacher's assistants".

They are still working on monthly themes along with the congregation.

As winter sets in, the children want to plan a game/fun day for a Saturday morning.

All ideas are welcome. Please feel free to contact Erica or Ed if you wish to participate with the children.

Everyone working with the children must sign an Ethics form.



Erica



From the Archives Closet

Ghosts of Universalists past Part III: The tragedy of Rev. York

The First Universalist Society in Niagara Falls preceded the First Unitarians. They met during the 1890's, and their last listing was in the 1908 city directory.¹

The Rev. De Witt Reilly was the Universalists' first settled minister from 1902-3. Out of the west from Waterloo, Iowa in March 1904 then came the Rev. Frank H. York. After two audition sermons he was hired as the Universalist minister in Niagara County. He rode the circuit, preaching in Lockport Sunday mornings and in Niagara Falls the same evening. He also preached in Olcott Beach summertime.²

Rev. York was an Indiana native and a graduate of Ann Arbor University (University of Michigan.) He was ordained as a Congregationalist but then joined the Universalists. He had led churches in Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin.³

The York family moved to 706 Cedar Avenue. The building still stands at 706-708 Cedar Avenue, around the corner from City Hall. In addition to Rev. York and his wife Addie, aged 48 and 41 respectively, there were six children: daughters Cleo, 21 and Nellie, 19, eldest son Frank Jr., 13, Agnes, 12, and two young sons, Carl, 11 and Clare, 9.⁴

Rev. York's Niagara Falls pastorate began with the Easter 1904 sermon "A spiritualized world." The church members assembled in Odd Fellows Hall at 4th and Niagara. On April 29 the topic was "The creative power of thought," with a choral accompaniment and a cornet soloist. Services continued through summertime 1905. In July he spoke on "The source of true religion and the truth in all" and "The flaw in Ahab's harness." August was summer vacation, and church resumed in September.

There was a church rummage sale from October 10-13.

The November 4 *Gazette* announced that "owing to the illness of the pastor Rev. F H York, Universalist services would be led by the Rev. H Philbrook Morrell of Buffalo," one of their many itinerant preachers.⁵

The plagues of Niagara

Love Canal was bad but not new. Niagara Falls's sordid history of pollution-related pestilence goes back to the 1800's.

"Typhoid Fever is Our Scourge!" shrieked the *Niagara Falls Gazette* on March 15, 1900. Health Officer Dr. W A Scott's report for 1899 cited 210 cases of the illness that year. Niagara Falls reported more typhoid fever than any city in New York State. Even much larger Buffalo had but 211 cases.

"Purer water is needed!"

In addition to primitive garbage collection and privies, the city's water, especially in the North End, was drawn directly from the Niagara River without any purification. The water was so poisonous that Dr. Scott warned citizens to avoid drinking water from any source or use it for cooking without first boiling it.⁶ The city's usual 30,000 inhabitants were augmented by an estimated 400,000 visitors annually. These were prey to water-borne diseases which they carried home with them.⁷

Some potential visitors chose to take their business elsewhere. The American Institute of Homeopathy moved their 1901 convention after "a considerable faction" complained that the Falls's water supply was so bad that it was dangerous to hold a convention there.⁸

Location, location. Sewage from the western Great Lakes, Buffalo and the Tonawandas flowed directly into the Niagara River. Without water filtering or treatment Niagara Falls's deaths from typhoid fever ranged from 107.9 to 184.4 per 1000 during the years 1898-1907.⁹ Its death rate was the worst in the civilized world.

Just what is typhoid fever?

Presently typhoid fever is rare in the United States. In 2006 there were 314 reported cases, compared to 36,000 in 1920. Of today's sufferers, 80% were travelers or inhabitants of Third World countries especially Southeast Asia.

The bacillus *Salmonella typhi* flourishes in polluted water or milk (or rarely through a carrier.) Victims are prostrated with fever exceeding 103 degrees, abdominal pains and distension, severe headache and a rash. If left untreated they can get psychosis and confusion. If the patient survives for three weeks, they face peritonitis, kidney failure, intestinal hemorrhage, and ultimately death.¹⁰

Even with modern antibiotic treatment, patients report (on the internet) that "I still don't feel well" weeks and months afterward. In 1912, surviving patients, who were 90% of those sickened, were actually ill for about four weeks and "unable to do any gainful occupation for six or eight weeks."¹¹

Rev. York's tragedy

On November 7, 1905, both Niagara Falls newspapers headlined "Death of Rev. York." After a three-week battle with typhoid fever, he succumbed to hemorrhaging, according to the *Cataract Journal*. "His recovery was looked for... when he began to skink rapidly" said the *Gazette*. The funeral service was conducted two days later by several Universalist clergy with Masonic rites.

Within the month, Mrs. York and the children left Niagara Falls to live with her mother in Illinois.¹²

The Universalists had a second connection with the Niagara Falls water purification scheme. When the city finally formed a committee to proceed with municipal water treatment, alderman Adin B. Chase spearheaded it. (Filtration was achieved in 1912.) Mr. Chase was a leading Universalist. He joined J Allen Johnson's group of Unitarians as a charter member. His daughter Nora married Karl Hutzel. Our kitchen is named in her memory, and a very generous donation by Chase family members enabled it to be remodeled in 1970.

Thanks to the Niagara Falls Public Library for resources and assistance.

Sources:

1. Niagara Falls, NY City Directory
2. *Niagara Falls Gazette* May 12, 1902
3. *Niagara Falls Gazette* and *Cataract-Journal* April 2, 1904
4. *Niagara Falls Gazette* November 10, 1905
5. 12th United States Census of Population
6. *Niagara Falls Gazette* March 15, 1900
7. *New York Times* September 15, 1912 commenting on an article by McLaughlin, Allan J. "Sewage pollution of interstate and international waters with special reference to the spread of typhoid fever"
8. *Niagara Falls Gazette* November 1, 1901
9. *New York Times*, ibid
10. Internet, Mayo Clinic on typhoid fever
11. *New York Times* ibid
12. *Cataract-Journal* December 8, 1905
13. Mizer, Hamilton "A city is born"

Janet

UU News St Lawrence District

CERG Link2Lead Program

Link2Lead.com is a website for local congregational ministers and lay leaders. It is available free of charge to congregations in the Central East Regional Group (CERG). Through Link2Lead and its various programs, you have access to the latest information about your community, hands-on tools to better understand and develop your own capabilities and a variety of additional resources to assist you in leading your

congregation into the new world of opportunities awaiting us in the 21st century. To view a short introductory video highlighting some of the programs available through Link2Lead, visit the CERG website at www.cerguua.org/link2lead.html

Healthy Congregations Testimonials

Rev. Renee Ruchotzke (CERG Regional Leadership Development Consultant) videotaped some of the participants of the Healthy Congregations series in the Pittsburgh cluster giving testimonials about Healthy Congregations and edited it into a promotional video to promote future Healthy Congregations trainings.

<http://youtu.be/7h-jxFbZfgY> [yes this looks bizarre but it is the correct URL]

Viewing is also available on the CERG web page about Healthy Congregations at <http://www.cerguua.org/healthycong.html>

Yvonne

December Birthdays

- 5th – Joy Rowlinson
- 18th – Madison Malluma
- 22nd – Jeanne Aydelotte
- 23rd – Shari Burke
- 30th – Gary McCunn

UU Niagara Activities – December 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 6:30pm Prisoners R People 2 Program	2	3 11am Caring Circle Meeting 1:30pm FUUtues Committee 2:30pm Stewardship Committee
4 11am Sunday Service 12pm Pot Luck Lunch	5	6	7	8	9 9am AIDS Food Drive	10 9am AIDS Food Drive
11 11am Sunday Service 12:30pm Board Meeting 3pm Birthday party	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 11am Sunday Service	19	20	21	22	23	24 7pm Christmas Carols 8pm Christmas Treats
25 No Service	26	27	28	29	30	31

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