

May 2011 **POWERLINE**

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara



Reminder to all members: Annual Meeting at 12:30pm on May 15 in the Sanctuary

Sunday Services (11:00am)

Worship Associate Betsy Diachun and Caring Circle Associate Yvonne Stocker

May 1: *The Threshold* – Rev. Theresa Kime

Come to explore the last chapter in the *House for Hope* book about our UU foundations and vision that we've been discussing all year. What might the doorways and thresholds of our spiritual community symbolize?

Chalice group meets after the service for contemplative reflection on the sermon topic.

May 8: *Taming the Fear of Alzheimer's Disease* – Peter Diachun

Short term memory loss is so common it is often referred to as "senior moments." Serious dementia affects almost all of us, either personally or to someone dear to us. It strips its victims of not only their minds, but of their very personages—their souls. Some of us who are genetically predisposed to Alzheimer's Disease fear it especially because we see what it does to members of our families. Our Unitarian Universalist practice offers some important help in overcoming our fear.

May 15: *Making Friends with the Shadow* – Rev. Theresa Kime

As we near Memorial Day and its recognition of those who have served in the military, let's look at the relationship our UU tradition has had with this group. How inclusive are we?

Annual Meeting 12:30pm in the Sanctuary.

Memorial Service for Lucile McElwain at 3:00pm in our Sanctuary.

May 22: *Invisible People* – Ed Tormay

The world is filled with people who are ignored, dismissed and forgotten. Their numbers are growing. Who are the invisible people of this world? How is it that we continue to ignore the obvious needs of those who cross our paths each and every day?

May 29: *Exceptionalism* – Rev. John Rex

Are we exceptional?

Minister's Weekend Schedule

Wednesday, April 27 - Friday April 29:

Rev. Terry will attend the SLD chapter of the UU Ministers' Association retreat and program in Ithaca.

Friday, April 29 & Saturday, April 30:

Rev. Terry will attend the SLD District Assembly in Ithaca, NY.

Friday, May 13 & Saturday, May 14:

Rev. Terry will attend, with members from FUUN Planning for Growth Team, the District Conference on Growth to be held in Canandaigua.

Sunday, May 15: 12:30-3:00pm: Annual Congregational meeting in the Sanctuary

FROM YOUR MINISTER:

As May brings us leaves, more flowers, more sunshine and time to be outside enjoying our senses and nature, I offer you this poem by ee cummings for reflection and joy:

i thank You God for most this amazing
day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky ;and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(i who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth
day of life and love and wings: and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any-lifted from the no
of all nothing-human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

Wishing you every blessing for a wonderful month of May,

Terry

Community Outreach Class a Success!

Thanks to good PR directed by Janet with assistance from Erica and Ed M., 33 people attended Rev. Terry's class on forgiveness at the Lewiston Library. This included 12 UU's and 21 from outside our Congregation. It was a thought-provoking topic and the class engaged it with attention. Participants were treated to delicious baked goods provided by Nan and Jeanne and her daughter Madeline (thank you!)

Terry

President's Corner

Many members have spent time with me discussing the church's financial situation since I wrote about it in the Powerline last month. It is important for everyone to understand it before the Annual Meeting on May 15. If you do not feel comfortable in voting on the budget please make an effort to become informed in the next few weeks. I am available.

This is painfully brought to our attention right now as we are being forced to sell some of our income producing assets of stocks and bonds to pay our expenses. It is now anticipated that our total assets will decline in the current fiscal year to \$94,000, and further to \$72,000 next year if we adopt the budget developed by the Budget Committee and being proposed by the Board to the Congregation for adoption. At this kind of "burn rate" we are really faced with a choice of determining the future of the church soon, or being forced to close our doors or change our operation drastically.

As the Board and the Minister have considered this, we have decided to recommend to the Congregation that Rev. Terry's contract be continued next year and propose a budget which includes this, BUT that the entire Congregation commit to making next year into a year of decision about the future of the church. Terry has committed to being

an active part of this process. The Board is drafting a resolution for the Congregation's consideration for a process to be followed. This will require participation by everyone. It is much larger than a single person, a committee, or the Board. It will include identifying alternatives, some of which may be creative and even exciting. We need to study our location, mode of operation, ministerial arrangement, sources of outside funding, and outreach to the community among many other things. This will take all of next year. By committing to this now we have time to shape our future. It can not only be challenging, but an enjoyable process. We need to go into it with an attitude of adventure, not gloom. Our situation is not hopeless at all. By carefully planning our future together now we can control it rather than just sliding into what we may not want.

Next year's proposed budget, together with some alternative budgets, is available. You are encouraged to study these and discuss them with others. See these documents by clicking the link below: http://www.firstuunf.org/files/Finacial_Pages_2.doc These are also available in printed form at the church.

Peter Diachun

Addition to the Policy Manual

At the last Board meeting a new policy was added the Policy Manual. This deals with political campaigning in the church. It is as follows:

Being mindful of our principles to be open, tolerant and fair and the rules regarding our tax exempt status, we approve the following policy for activities on church property or church-sponsored activities: Speakers, forums, and written materials regarding issues, including various political stances on the issues will be allowed. Speakers, forums and written materials promoting an individual politician, slate for election to office or one political party will not be allowed.

Peter Diachun

Annual Report

The Board has decided to make the Annual Report available Sunday, May 8, the week prior the Annual Meeting on Sunday, May 15. It will be assembled and printed May 5. Nothing received later than May 4 can be included.

Potluck Dinners

Our next First Friday Potluck Supper will be on May 6. We will gather as usual to set up at 6:00pm. The meal will start at 6:30. We may have a casual program on Prisoner Support and Advocacy as an alternative to games for participants who so choose.

Our last potluck in this series will actually be on Sunday, June 5 after Church.

We also expect to have another joint potluck support with New Hope Baptist Church soon. The time and place will be announced.

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 March | Church Year 8/1/2010 - 7/31/2011 Budget for the Full Year |
|---|---|--|
| Income from Operations | \$24,849 | \$39,300 |
| Income from Investments | \$2,660 | \$4,000 |
| Total Income | \$27,509 | \$43,300 |
| Expenses from Operations | \$39,177 | \$66,100 |
| Capital Contributions Less Capital Expenses | -\$265 | -\$4,000 |
| Change in Money Assets for the Year | -\$11,934 | -\$26,800 |
| Total Money Assets as of March 2011 | \$104,472 | |

Board of Trustees News

April 20 Board meeting highlights

First Friday potlucks were reviewed and final plans made. A new policy regarding political campaigning was adopted. Preparation of the annual report was discussed. Approval was given to liquidate some securities as we need the money to pay our bills. Rev. Terry's contract for next year was discussed. The budget for next year was discussed. The pledge drive was a success. Thanks to Ed Tormay for his work on the pledge drive. The list of voting members was reviewed. Plans for Future Initiatives were discussed; see president's report for more information on this.

Annual Meeting – Sunday, May 15 at 12:30pm in the Sanctuary.

Next Board meeting – Sunday, June 19 at 1:00pm. All members are welcome.

Caring Circle

Our Caring Circle members have trained / retrained with Rev. Terry. We have added two new people to the team, Joy Rowlinson and Nan Simon. Continuing members are Marge Gillies, Yvonne Stocker, Peter Diachun, and Judy Bongiovanni. Of course, we cannot do it all but will try to enlist other members of the congregation when there is a need. Please see one of the Caring Circle members if you have a need or know of someone who does.

Judy

Outreach

The Outreach offering on the third Sunday this month, May 15, will be made to "The Magdalene Project" in Niagara Falls. This is a group headed by Joanne Lorenzo which ministers to people on the streets in Niagara Falls. The project is located at St. George's Pro-Cathedral on the corner of 19th and Falls St.

Betsy

Our People

The Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo is being honored at the annual Planned Parenthood dinner for their Advocacy for Choice. The event is on Wednesday, May 11 at Kleinhans Music Hall. A few of us are going. If you are interested, please talk to Betsy Diachun.

Memorial service for Lucile McElwain who provided music and lead the choir for many years will be held on May 15 at 3:00pm in our Sanctuary.

We are all invited to the installation of our Rev. Terry at the UU Congregation of Northern Chautauqua in Fredonia. It will take place at 4:00pm on Sunday, May 22, at the Fredonia Grange Hall, 58 West Main St. Child care is provided, but the building is not handicapped accessible.

Invitation to Installation at UU Northern Chautauqua

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p><i>Ceremony will be held on the upper level. Reception will be held on the lower level.</i></p> |
| <p><i>The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Northern Chautauqua invites you to celebrate with us the installation of The Reverend Theresa Arlene Kime</i></p> | <p><i>We regret that this historic building is not handicapped accessible.</i></p> |
| <p><i>Sunday, May 22, 2011 4 o'clock in the afternoon Fredonia Grange Hall 58 West Main Street Fredonia, NY 14063</i></p> | <p><i>Childcare for infants and toddlers will be provided</i></p> |
| <p><i>Reception to follow More information on reverse</i></p> | <p><i>For driving/parking information, please visit www.uucnc.org and click on the contact us tab.</i></p> |
| | |
| <p><i>Clergy and Religious Educators are invited to robe and process Please assemble at 3:30</i></p> | <p><small>Clockwise from top left, windows dedicated March 2001 represent earth-centered spiritual traditions, Unitarian Universalism, eastern religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Four panels celebrate the memory of Jack Singer, 1930-2005. The other two were gifts from June Stevens.</small></p> |
| | <p><small>Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Northern Chautauqua PO Box 11, Fredonia, NY 14063 voicemail only: (716) 679-7944</small></p> |

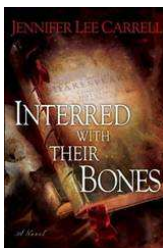
Betsy

Adult Reflection and Exploration

We are winding up the year after the annual rebellion and attendance at the South Wilson Fire Hall breakfast. It was so good. New voices and ideas are always welcome on Sunday mornings at 9:45am in the Founders Room – starting again in September.

Judy

Book Discussion Group



On the second Tuesday of each month we meet, talk and laugh with a good book. On May 10 at 7:00pm in the Founders Room we will discuss *Interred With Their Bones* by Jennifer Lee Carrell. This mystery revises and revisits Shakespeare with a catchy plot and fast paced action reaching back in time. All are welcome. Come enjoy the fun.

Judy

Children's Religious Education

In May the children will be working on the seventh principle, Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. one project will be a trip to the Niagara Falls Aquarium

In April the children worked on art projects and had an Easter egg hunt. Madison helped with the UU minute. No one guessed the "famous" UU in our church – it was one of the children - Bryce!

Madison and Vicky will lead the Congregation with their opening words once a month. The words are:

*We are the church of an open mind,
We are the church of a loving heart,
We are the church of the helping hands,
We are the church that cares for the earth,
We are the church that works for friendship and peace.*

Anyone interested in helping CRE, call or text: 523-8103 or email Erica ericakopp@yahoo.com or Ed Tormay columbaltd22@gmail.com

Anyone working with the children must sign a new Ethics Form each year; this is not only a good practice and an insurance requirement but a positive commitment to our children.

Erica

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

Social

* Potluck – May 6

We will gather as usual to set up at 6:00 PM. The meal will start at 6:30. We may have a casual program on Prisoner Support and Advocacy as an alternative to games for participants who so choose.

* June Potluck June 5

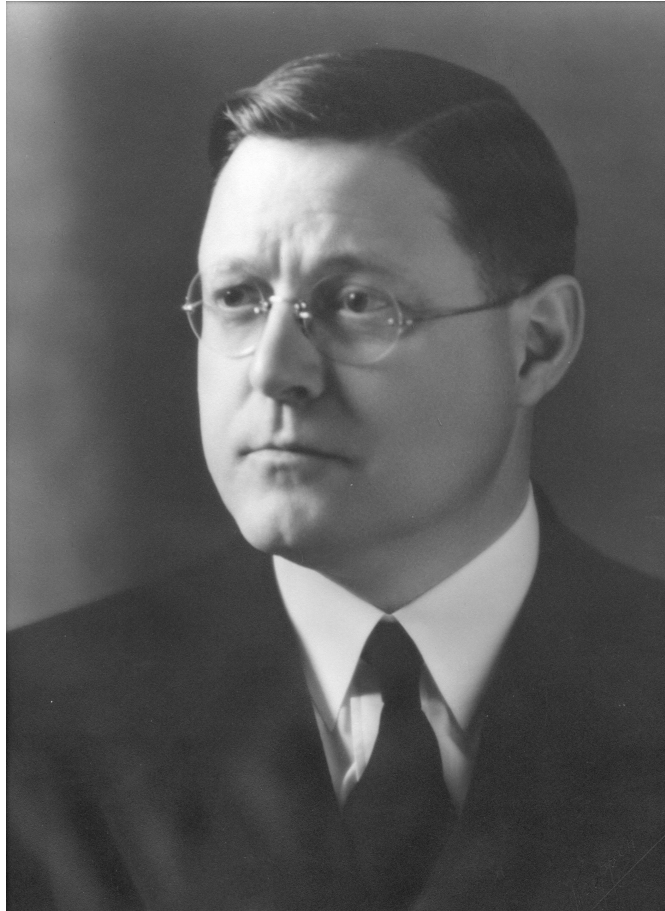
The last potluck of the season will not be on Friday but on Sunday after Church June 5.

May Birthdays

- 6th – Tina Deakyne
- 9th – Elise Gray
- 12th – Barbara Hathaway
- 17th – Juliet Pietrobono
- 21st – Glen Herman
- 28th – Steve Lynch
- 30th – Keara Schaser

From the Archives Closet

The Rev. Orville Bruce Swift, first minister, continued



We introduced the Rev. Orville Bruce Swift; first minister of the First Unitarian Church of Niagara Falls, in the April 2011 Powerline. To recap, he came from Middletown, NY. On April 3, 1920 he preached his first sermon for an unofficial group calling itself First Unitarian Church which met at 910 Main St.

Throughout 1920 Rev. Swift offered weekly sermons. Some of these were:

- The brotherhood of man
- The religious liberal's idea of Jesus and His divinity
- Independence and democracy (for July 4th)
- The city of God
- An earthly not a future heavenly attainment
- Some vacations mentioned in the Bible and some not mentioned

- The supreme requirement of religion
- A four-part series on mental health and religion

None of these seems like light going. In all the advertisements appearing in the *Niagara Falls Gazette's* "In the Churches" column, "the general public [was invited] to attend the services of this church." Liberal religion and the church's lack of a creed were emphasized. Services were held through the summer, and Sunday school began on September 26 at 10:15am.

The advertisement for October 9, 1920, gave the sermon as "The practical element in the mental healing movement." Then almost as an aside: At the close of the morning service Sunday, October 16, the First Unitarian Church of Niagara Falls will be formally organized. No further publicity appeared in the *Gazette* about the founding of this newly-organized house of worship.

While J. Allen Johnson, W.W. Kincaid and their associates scrambled with paperwork to set up the church administration, they, as the Board of Trustees, resolved on November 7 to formally invite Rev. Swift "to become minister of this church, at the salary of \$2500 per annum." Accepting their offer, Rev. Swift "trusted that the fellowship would continue for many years." He and Mrs. Swift moved to a house at 919 McKinley

There seems to have been some conflict, as shown in a letter to the secretary of the Board of Trustees, undated but probably from 1923. In the MEMORANDUM OF METHODS OF RAISING CHURCH FUNDS he says: The question of my attitude on the matter of raising church funds has been raised...

I favor the support of the church services by voluntary contributions only.

I have no objection to raising funds by any method that commends itself to any organization in the church... for organization purposes, building funds or equipment.

I do not favor holding cake, candy or apron sales outside the church building as others churches hold them in vacant stores or store windows...

I will not be the minister of a church which pays the pastor's salary by means of fund raised by church suppers and sales given by the women.

Please put this where you may have it handy if the question to which it refers should come up again.

Rev. Swift's pastoral association with Niagara Falls Unitarians ended in 1926. His letter of resignation of April 5 stated: "I am resigning for entirely personal reasons. I have no other church in prospect nor have I any commercial position." He was going to sell his house, go south, and do research.

This may not have been exactly the truth. "History of Heresy," a history of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo, lists Bruce Swift serving as a Universalist minister in that city from 1927-39. He was a guest at the Niagara Falls church's 25th anniversary dinner in 1945.

Returning to his native Wisconsin, he died in a Beloit nursing home on April 20, 1970, aged 84. As the first minister, the Rev. O.B. Swift saw construction of the present stone church and establishment of the church organization, which are his legacies.

Janet

UU Niagara Activities – May 2011

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--------|---------------------------------|-----------|----------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1 11am Sunday Service | | | | | | |
| 1pm Chalice Group - Meditation | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 6pm Potluck Game Night | 7 |
| | | | | | | 14 |
| 8 11am Sunday Service | | 10 7pm Book Discussion Group | 11 | 12 | 13 6pm Planning for Growth | 9am Planning for Growth 9am Saturday Work Party 4:30pm Drum Circle |
| | 9 | | | | | |
| 15 11am Sunday Service | | | | | | |
| 12:30pm Annual Meeting | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 1:30pm Planning for Growth Team |
| 3pm Memorial Service - Lucile McElwain | | | | | | |
| 22 11am Sunday Service | | | | | | |
| | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| | | | | | | |
| 29 11am Sunday Service | | | | | | |
| | 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