

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



**Sunday Services (11:00am)**

Theme: **Belonging**

Worship Associate Teresa Labuszewski and Caring Circle Associate Marge Gillies

**October 2:** *Belonging: The Ancestor's Voice* – Rev. Theresa Kime

Who are the ancestors whose voices are still heard in this congregation? What do they tell us now? What questions might they raise for us as we consider what it means to belong here? Today we'll explore these questions.

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

**October 9:** *Prisoners are people, too* – Karima Amin

Going “behind the walls” of New York State prisons opened Karima's eyes to a new world, that is desolate, isolated, and too often violent and dehumanizing. Prisoners are people. Though locked away, they are still a part of this community. Karima comes to share with us.

**October 16:** *Belonging: The Larger View* – Rev. Theresa Kime

The Universalists declared we were kinfolk with all – since we would all be going to heaven, we needed to recognize all were of equal worth and dignity. What might this viewpoint mean for us UU's now? What issues engage our congregation and our UU Association? This is Association Sunday, and we will consider these questions and send our monthly outreach offering to the UUA in recognition.

**October 23:** *Just to Live* – Rev. Donald Reidell

Just to be, just to live, just to build on Truth – That remains life's purpose and goal.

**October 30:** *The Friendly Forest* – Rev. John Rex

The story begins: “Once upon a time in the Friendly Forest there lived a lamb...” It is a story of belonging - and anxiety and distress and... Let's see where it takes us.

I want to make everyone aware that on October 9 our guest speaker will be Karima Amin, founder of ***Prisoners are People, Too Inc.*** Karima is a well known storyteller, educator, and author from Buffalo, who shares tales in her repertoire throughout the US and Canada. Karima taught in the Buffalo school system for 24 years and provides performances, workshops, and keynotes to promote literacy, increase cultural awareness, and improve human relations. In 2005 Karima founded the organization, ***Prisoners are People, Too*** whose mission is in part to educate the community about issues surrounding incarcerated, and formerly incarcerated individuals with emphasis on the humanity of both the victim and the offender. Her work with this population seems all the more pressing especially with the recent execution of Troy Davis in a Georgia prison. Karima's talk brings to mind the community forum on the death penalty which was held in our sanctuary some years back.

*Ed Tormay*

### **Minister's Weekend Schedule**

#### **Saturday, October 1:**

10:00-11:15pm: Caring Circle  
Noon-2:00pm: Wedding off-site  
2:00-4:00pm: Calls and Visits

#### **Sunday, October 2:**

Noon-2:00pm: Potluck Lunch

#### **Friday October 7 and Saturday October 8:**

Rev. Terry will be in Canandaigua attending with members of our Planning for Growth Team the last session of the three-year St. Lawrence District program our congregation has been a part of that has focused on small congregation growth and vitality.

#### **Saturday, October 15:**

10:00am-Noon: Planning for Growth Team  
1:00-2:30pm: Introduction to our Faith and Congregation  
2:30-4:00pm: FUUtutes Committee

#### **Sunday, October 16:**

1:00-3:00pm Board Meeting

### **FROM YOUR MINISTER:**

Exploring the topic of belonging this month provides us with a good opportunity to consider membership and what it means to be a member of this congregation.

When you join our congregation, you become part of our caring community, available to celebrate, encourage, and support you through life's journey and your spiritual growth. You join your voice and hands with others to have a stronger presence in making our local community and larger world a place of welcome and blessing for all. You may develop leadership skills and your creativity, and share in group processes to determine future direction of our congregation. You become part of a progressive faith tradition spanning hundreds of years that has stood for human dignity, religious freedom, and spiritual expansion as well as justice and compassion. Your presence and participation strengthen this spiritual home and its ability to carry on this important tradition. It is the members that make the congregation what it is-- that determine its present and its future.

If you've been attending services for a while, you may wish to take the next step in considering membership and attend an Introduction to our Faith and Congregation. The next one will be held Saturday, October 15, from 1:00-2:30pm, in the Founders Room (up the stairs in back of the sanctuary). Come to find out more about us and ask any questions you may have. We'll explore our individual faith journeys and that of our congregation and hear about the roots of our UU faith tradition.

If you're already a member of our congregation, consider inviting someone to attend the Introduction and come with them! Perhaps there's a neighbor, coworker, family member who is curious about us. Someone you think would like to learn more. We'll even have some refreshments to enjoy together afterwards! Folks need to be invited in to belong. Let us welcome them.

Blessings,

*Terry*

### **President's Corner**

This year has started off with great excitement. The board is enthusiastic and has many ideas for this year. I have the privilege of working with wonderful board members who are enthusiastic with lots of ideas which we enjoy working on and sharing. As with any

enthusiastic bunch we sometimes stray off topic but then the tangents can produce very interesting ideas!

During the summer Andrea Galey presented the topic of art. She also led us in a fun art experiment. Here is what we made!



Andrea then displayed the art we created in her Niagara Falls art gallery.

*Erica*

### **Board of Trustees News**

September 18 Board meeting highlights

We had a lively and productive board meeting with all board members present and four guests as well. Betsy Diachun requested that we look into the possibility of a church administrator to make sure the everyday maintenance and paperwork gets done. The board agreed that this was a good idea and asked that Peter and Betsy Diachun recruit people to help them come up with a job description and pay. It will be a reach for us financially, but the church has to be maintained and well run if we are to grow, and it can't hurt to explore this avenue. Betsy also reminded us that Veteran's Day is 11/11/11 this year and would like to do something special for our veterans on that date. There are so many who are wounded mentally and physically, might be homeless and are alone with no one to talk to. Please contact Betsy to brainstorm this event.

Rev. Terry requested that we reinstitute the Sunday Potlucks after church. We agreed to do this on the first Sunday of each month when she is in the pulpit. This is great news for you coffee hour hosts. You don't have to bring munchies, just set up dishes, get coffee brewing and rope in a few to help with clean up. These social events really help us come together as a congregation. Friday nights can be difficult for many to attend, so Sunday afternoon seems the best option.

We also have established a Stewardship committee. To begin with, Marie Howard and I will meet with Rev. Terry to set the scope of this committee. We expect the primary focus will be funding and service opportunities at the church. We don't do a very good

job of discussing money in our church and this committee will explore ways to change that. We need funding to stay vital and grow and we need an open and honest look at how we fund the church. See one of us and express your ideas.

Marie Howard would like to set up a FUUN coffee house reunion. Our church used to hold a coffee house for area youth as a get together. This could be really fun, and even if you weren't around in those days, I'm sure you would be welcome. We used to be a vibrant part of the community and it would be great to hear this church history come alive from the lips of those who were here. She also suggested a basket raffle and Christmas bazaar. The board gave approval for her to move forward with all three activities.

And the last item on the agenda, but certainly not the least, is the goal the board set for the year. We have all talked about becoming involved in our community as a whole church, but everything we discussed in the past seemed so daunting that we never really moved forward with that. We also wanted to think of something that everyone could get involved in. My concern was for the disenfranchised youth in Niagara Falls. If they are not into sports, there are not a lot of places to get recognition. I was listening to NPR and there was a program about the nerds of the world. It is the smart underachievers who often become tomorrow's leaders. The teenage years are among the most difficult years in one's life, and this is a critical time when the foundation is laid for a person to become a productive member of society or a lost soul who does not contribute to society. There is a program funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, called Poetry Out Loud. It is open to 9-12 grade students. It is a poetry recitation contest. It involves teachers in a school and is done during class time, so we would need to get a local school, preferably Niagara Falls High School, involved although private schools can also participate. Our role would consist in providing judges, a venue for the contest, an audience, and coaching for interested students. The contest produces a school winner, then a regional winner, then a state winner and then a trip to Washington DC for a national winner. Winners are eligible for scholarships. The beauty of this effort is that we don't have to reinvent the wheel. All necessary materials, including lesson plans are available on the Poetry Out Loud website. Ed McGreevy has talked with NOAH members and collaboration with other churches in the area is a potential. Youth who are involved in the arts do better in school and are less likely to be involved in gangs and drugs. Even though it might be too late to participate this year, we could get things in place to ready for next year. In this event we might host our own contest this year just as a warm up. I encourage you all to go to <http://www.poetryoutloud.org/> and look at the video of previous contestants. It is inspiring.

It looks like we will have a great year at the church. As board members, we are here for you. If you want to participate in any of the above or have other ideas or concerns, let us know. This is your church. It can only be what you make it.

Next Board meeting – Sunday, October 16 at 1:00pm. All members are welcome.

*Teresa Labuszewski, Secretary*

### **Outreach**

The Outreach offering on the third Sunday this month, October 18, will be made to the UUA as our participation in Association Sunday.

*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 the Church fiscal year which ended on July 31, 2011:

	Church Year 8/1/2010 - 7/31/2011 Actual Year to Date as at July 31, 2011	Church Year 8/1/2010 - 7/31/2011 Budget for the Full Year
Income from Operations	\$37,665	\$39,300
Income from Investments	\$4,523	\$4,000
Total Income	\$42,189	\$43,300
Expenses from Operations	\$62,273	\$66,100
Capital Contributions Less Capital Expenses	-\$165	-\$4,000
Change in Money Assets for the Year	-\$20,249	-\$26,800
Total Money Assets July 31, 2011	\$101,121	

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

	Church Year 8/1/2011 - 7/31/2012 Actual Year to Date as at August 31, 2012	Church Year 8/1/2011 - 7/31/2012 Budget for the Full Year
Income from Operations	\$2,839	\$39,800
Income from Investments	\$0	\$3,400
Total Income	\$2,839	\$43,200
Expenses from Operations	\$2,757	\$64,350
Capital Contributions Less Capital Expenses	\$0	-\$1,000
Change in Money Assets for the Year	\$82	-\$22,150
Total Money Assets August 31, 2011	\$101,203	

## **Caring Circle**

Our caring circle members will continue to check up on everyone in the congregation but any and every "heads up " from others are welcome. Just contact a member of the Caring Circle ( Marge Gillies, Joy Rowlinson, Peter Diachun, Nan Simon, Yvonne Stocker and Judy Bongiovanni ). Keep your bookmark handy. If you don't have one, ask and you shall receive.

*Judy*

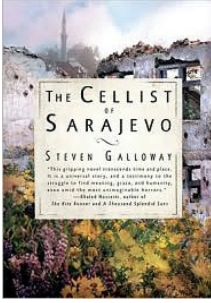
## **Adult Reflection and Exploration**

Adult Discussion Group

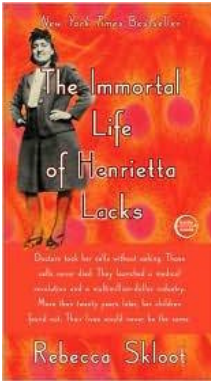
Sharing of wit and wisdom will resume the Sunday AFTER Columbus Day, October 16 at 9:45am in the Founder's Room. The discussion for the first meeting will be "One thing I Believe". Bring a statement of one thing you believe such as "I believe in Santa Claus" and be ready to discuss it.

*Judy*

## Book Discussion Group



We will meet October 11 at 7:00pm in Unity Hall to discuss *The Cellist of Sarajevo* by Steven Galloway. Inspired by Vedran Smailovic, the cellist, who played in a bombed-out square for 22 days, this novel is about four people trying to maintain a semblance of their humanity in the midst of war.



For November we will review *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot. A multilayered non fiction account of faith, science, journalism and grace, it is also a tale of medical wonders, arrogance, racism, poverty and the bond that grows between very different people.

Judy

## Marriage Equality

The New York State Senate passed legislation commonly called the Marriage Equality Law, establishing the right of same-sex couples to marry, effective July 25, 2011. Plans were made by Mayor Dyster of the City of Niagara Falls and the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation (NTCC) to hold a group wedding ceremony because there were many requests to perform marriages.

Similarly, several members of the congregation formed a Wedding Committee to proactively address the anticipated numbers of couples who might wish to be married in our church. This Committee decided to hold an Open House. The group thought there might be a large demand for non-member weddings which would require more officiants than the minister.

Initially, it was considered that perhaps lay leaders could be granted authority by the Board of Trustees to be such officiants. Due to a scheduling conflict with Rev. Terry's calendar, making her unable to perform that ceremony, the first church wedding was officiated by Marge Gillies who was granted temporary authority to do so by the board.

However, demand has not proven onerous and Rev. Terry will, as has been and is, the practice among UU congregations with ministers, continue to be our congregation's officiant at weddings between members and for non-members using our sanctuary who are looking for an officiant.

At the last meeting of the First UU Wedding Committee, a decision was made to keep the Wedding Committee "on call." Marge will continue as Chair, Betsy will serve as Wedding Coordinator, Marie will continue as building use coordinator and Yvonne will record weddings on the First UU calendar.

A group same-sex wedding ceremony was held on Goat Island involving close to 50 couples from all over the country. Rev. Theresa Kime of First Unitarian Universalist Church, Rev. Marne Pritchard of First Congregational Church and Council Member

Kristen Grandinetti from the City of Niagara Falls officiated at the ceremony on July 25, 2011.

In anticipation of protesters, Andrea Galey and Tina Deakyne organized a Circle of Love made up of volunteers who formed a circle between the couples and a small group of protesters. A reception for all participants was held following the ceremony.

Afterwards, Andrea and Tina were married by Rev. Terry. Their wedding was captured on Channel 2 News. Local, national and international media covered the event. Congratulations to Andrea and Tina – the first members of our congregation to be married by Rev. Terry since the law passed.

Justin and Jarrod Atkinson were united in marriage on Saturday, July 30, 2011 at 3:00pm at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara. Marge Gillies performed the ceremony. Close to 70 friends and family joined by several church members attended the service. Rich Jagow, brother of Justin, played the electric violin as the mothers of the couple escorted their sons down the aisle. After friends and family representatives gave their support to Justin and Jarrod, the couple exchanged their vows and rings. Those in attendance participated in a group wine toast to Justin and Jarrod. A reception held at the couple's home in LaSalle followed the ceremony. Congratulations to Justin and Jarrod Atkinson, the first church wedding since the passage of the Marriage Equality Law.

Marge

### **Children's Religious Education**

This year the children are following the monthly themes of the sermons. On the fourth Sunday of each month the children will present what they have worked on for each theme.

The older children will be making more of the decisions as to what the CRE should be doing. They would like to what have a game day and maybe run movie night again.

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

Erica

### **Social**

**Contest** How many Religious Signs do you know?

- LOOK around the Sanctuary, see what's new.
- LOOK around the Narthex, find the entry forms.
- LOOK at the entry form, answer *a////////* information (without using the internet)
- LOOK in Unity Hall, find where to put your completed entry form.  
\*\*\*\*\*Forms will be available October 2nd\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*Must be returned by 11 am October 30th, no later\*\*\*\*
- LOOK in Unity Hall for the Winner
- Keep LOOKing, you never know what you will find.  
#####Prize Donated by our Children's Religious Education#####

### **Calling all Hosts, Hostesses**

- Let's get things going again ...
- Circle dinners...  
to be held the weekends of November 5 or November 12
- Also looking for anyone who would like to help.

Marie

## **October Birthdays**

- 4<sup>th</sup> – Joe Padlog
- 23<sup>rd</sup> – Rob Howard
- 26<sup>th</sup> – Marie Howard
- 28<sup>th</sup> – Nan Simon

## **From the Archives Closet**

### **Ghosts of Universalists past — Part I**

Like a flower, like some churches or organizations, it flourished, bloomed, and wilted. But something happened...

The national Universalist and Unitarian churches merged in 1961. Thus First Unitarian Church of Niagara Falls became First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara as we know it today.

Under the leadership of engineer J Allen Johnson, a group calling itself the Niagara Falls Unitarians began meeting in 1914, holding services led by various imported Unitarian preachers in halls around the city. The new church and its liberal philosophies did not appear spontaneously, however. Universalism existed in the city in the 19th century and into the 20<sup>th</sup>. Niagara County towns and villages hosted Universalist services from times of early settlement.

In attempting to discover exactly when Universalism existed in Niagara Falls, I have embarked on what looks like a long documentary journey. In bits and pieces I'll try to find what those Victorian liberal religionists were advertising to their fellow Cataract City citizens, who morphed into Unitarians. This is not a theological essay but a local history.

Services were held at the Niagara County Court House before the first local Universalist Church at Middleport was constructed in 1841. (This charming classic cobblestone building graces the village's main street today.) Further buildings followed: at Lockport in 1843, Olcott in 1858, and Cambria in 1868. In *The Souvenir History of Niagara County, New York* (Pioneer Association, 1902) Rev. Otis F. Alvord states, "The church at Niagara Falls was organized in 1889."

According to Mrs. George Cooley's paper "Unitarians in Niagara Falls" (read at Howard Hall, March 27, 1960) a contingent of the charter members of what became the Unitarian Church had belonged to the Universalist Church in the early 1900's.

*The Daily Cataract*, a long-defunct newspaper, favorably publicized Universalist activities then. The Archivist is reading microfilm copies to see if the 1889 date is correct and what happened next. More next time, and thanks to the Local History Dept., Niagara Falls Public Library.

*Janet*

## UU News

### **Starr King School for the Ministry**

Dakotta Alex is a student at Starr King School for the Ministry who has provided us with some information regarding formal UU education and the UUA ordination process.

Further information is available from Yvonne or look at <http://www.sksm.edu/>

### **InterConnections**

InterConnections is a service of the UUA's Periodicals Office. It is made possible by congregations' Annual Program Fund.

InterConnections features like "FORTH Program Inspires Stewardship Growth"

[uua.org/interconnections/interconnections/187330.shtml](http://uua.org/interconnections/interconnections/187330.shtml) are published monthly; the InterConnections

Tipsheet <http://tipsheet.blogs.uua.org/> is updated weekly. To subscribe on-line send a note to

[interconnections@uua.org](mailto:interconnections@uua.org)

*Yvonne*

### **UU Niagara Activities – October 2011**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						<b>1</b> 10am Caring Circle
<b>2</b> 11am Sunday Service 12pm Potluck Lunch	<b>3</b> 8pm Habitat for Humanity	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 2pm Andrea & Tina Wedding
<b>9</b> 11am Sunday Service	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 7pm Book Group	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 10am Planning for Growth Team 1pm Introduction to our Faith and Congregation 2:30pm FUUtutes Committee
<b>16</b> 11am Sunday Service 1pm Board Meeting	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> 11am Sunday Service	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> 11am Sunday Service	<b>31</b>					

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

*Yvonne*