

# Powerline

*First Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Niagara*

639 Main Street  
Niagara Falls, NY 14301  
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**February 2021**

*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.

It's a simple one step process: Just email your request to [uuniagara@gmail.com](mailto:uuniagara@gmail.com) or click the link. Please spread the word.

Many thanks to our contributors Marge Gillies, Peter Diachun, Betsy Diachun, and Erica Kopp.

## Sunday Services

### February 7: "Raising Men of Merit"

Speaker: Dr. Marvin Wilson  
Moderator: Carolyn Storms  
Coffee Hour Host: Linda Hurley  
Usher: Paul Brundage

### February 14: "What's Hatching?"

In this dark, cold winter we nest in our homes and wonder what may hatch in spring, on both personal and national levels. In this service we'll be considering the egg a symbol of life's potential, and its appearances in some ancient creation stories.

Speaker: John Snodgrass  
Coffee Hour Host: Patty and Bill Lisk  
Usher: Wally Lamb

### February 21: "The world's on fire and we still fall in love"

Today's sermon is inspired by the song of the same title by Texas band, Parker Woodland. Rev Erin Walters is the lead for the band. This song brought out so many feelings in me at a time when we; as a nation, as a faith, as a community, have swirling emotions. But Love, love always calls us and we answer. Come hear this great song and fall in love this Sunday.

Speaker: Susan Frawley  
Coffee Hour Host: Erica Kopp  
Usher: Betsy Diachun

## **February 28:** Part Two of the American Freethought DVD Series.

The abolition movement seeds the women's rights and free thought movements. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Seneca Falls women's conference are described. Suffragist-freethinker Matilda Hoslyn Gage and Darwin's *Origin of Species* contributed to free thinking. It faced Religious resistance by the American Tract Society and morals crusader Anthony Comstock and many others. D. M. Bennett's newspaper, *The Truth Seeker*, and the rise of the "The Great Agnostic", Robeert Ingersoll ushered in the dawn of America's first Culture Wars.

Moderator: Peter Diachun

Coffee Hour Host: Erica Kopp

Usher: Marge Gillies

### **President's Report**

January was an emotional month for many of us. Many of us experienced great relief that the political control of the country changed without terrible trouble which certainly seemed possible, or even likely. It seemed that a very dark time had lifted. People have shared with me that they, like me, wept from the strength of our relief.

Our little church was an important support to most of us. It demonstrated the importance of sharing values in frightening times. Our common principles are important to us and when they are seriously threatened we need each other for comfort and strength.

The hard times are certainly not over. We have very challenging times ahead, but we have reasons to now believe that we may be on the way to recovery. Right now it is time to share a few tears of joy.

Peter

## 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

In the words of poet, May Sarton...

*“No one comes to this house who is not changed.  
I meet no one who does not change me.”*

From the last stanza of section 3, **Gestalt at 60**

Those words are a lovely reminder of the interconnectedness we seek. Those who choose to be Unitarian Universalists have made an impact upon me. This church and its people, including, ministers, parishioners, long-time friends, or new friends form a wonderful web of support in troubled times.

We have had the pleasure of ministry from the Rev. Frances Manley and the Rev. Theresa Kime. They each got us to sing! I loved to hear the music of organist and choir director, Lucille McElwain. Now, we have the talented musician, Patricia Calback.

I remember Marbud Prozeller, Christine Jacoby, Jeanne Aydelotte, Jane Harrington, Joyce Peterson Patricia Loretto, and Mary Strout. They are part of the herstory of FUUN. Judi Bongiovanni, Susan Diachun, Jean Speck, Rosemary Sweetman, Betsy Diachun, Kathy McCunn, Teresa Labuszewski, and Joy Rowlinson, just to name a few women. Each formed a circle of savvy, smart, FUUN people who could weather any storm, in my opinion. The church worked well when they were present, in or out of the church. Amazing people, each of you!

In celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> year we will mention more people, ministers and lay people who contributed much to our church and the world. Several past members have written about their memories of the church and its activities in the recently produced *100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Memories*. It was wonderful to hear from and about them. We miss them *all*.

Grateful for contributions of all FUUN folks including past ministers and speakers, the abbreviation (FUUN) stuck. It was believed to come at the suggestion of *Rev. Frances Manley* because we, at **F**irst **U**nitarian **U**niversalist **N**iagara, like to infuse our services or events with a little fun.

For many years our beloved *Therese Drozdowski*, Church secretary for 44 years, typed, carefully saved, and filed documents. She likely used the typewriter donated in memory of one of the church founders, Shirley Traver. I wonder whether that typewriter is still in the Founder's Room. Therese used the new mimeograph machine, as mentioned in an account written by the Rev. George N. Marshall. In fact, he often helped her set it up so that she and the editor, Joyce Peterson, could print the weekly Powerline. Therese knew many of the ministers and most of our members. We have very fond memories of them both working hard to meet a deadline.

*Janet McKenna* had experience as an archival librarian. She took the documents home to sort and catalog. In doing so, she saved our church history for the ages. Janet also taught us to pay attention to people who had difficulty hearing, resulting in the Loop system that was installed by Peter Diachun. She also wrote a few plays for services. We are incredibly grateful for her contributions to FUUN.

Starting next month as part of the ongoing 100 Year Anniversary of FUUN, I agreed to write articles about few members who helped make our church what it is today. Similar articles would be welcome if anyone wishes to submit an article for future publication. *Marge Gillies, 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee*

#### Historical Document Research

Several years ago, there was a huge fire at a church in Niagara Falls that destroyed much church history in the process. At Buffalo State College, a digital database was created free to area churches. Thanks to *Pete Ames*, FUUN was added to the list so that most of the documents Janet organized are safe in the digital database collection at the E. H. Butler Library located at SUNY Buffalo State.

The database is accessible to anyone. It can be found by going to the following link. <http://library.buffalostate.edu/archives/mfc>  
Once at that site, look to the left for "Digital Collections" and click on it. The, scrolling down a bit under "Church Collections, find "First Unitarian."

*Marge Gillies, 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee*

## **February - Card games and Cross Country Skiing**

On some Saturday in February, either the 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup> – depending on the weather and the skiing conditions – we'll meet at Bond Lake (now called the Clyde L. Burmaster County Park) for some fun outdoor activities and indoor with cards, or Scrabble and other games. There is a lovely warming house there with a GREAT fireplace and Peter will make his famous chili to warm us up. Please plan to wear a mask inside. Besides cross country skiing there is a great tubing/sledding hill, ice skating or one can walk in the park. Inside we will have cards and games available. We will meet at 10 AM in the Warming House parking lot for skiing, skating or sledding . Be there by noon for lunch and games.

We will keep you posted which day it will be, depending on the weather. You can get reports from there directly by calling 731-3256 for a report of the conditions. We will let you know in FUUN's Thursday's announcements if we are NOT going. Unfortunately, there are NO RENTALS for equipment! If you don't know how to get there, or there is any other question or need please call the DIACHUNS @754-3028

## **Sympathy**

It is with great sadness that we write of the death of Caitlin McCunn, Kathy's daughter. Caitlin had bronchitis earlier in the winter and succumbed to problems with her breathing on January 4, 2021. Caitlin's cheery smile and disposition will be remembered by many.

UUA

## Saving Democracy

By Carol Thomas Cissel

January 20, 2021

“I want you to understand that your first duty is to humanity. I want others to look at us and see that we care not just about ourselves but about others.”

—[Madam C.J. Walker](#)

On January 20, 2021, our country changed. The new Administration coming to D.C. makes me hopeful and brings me pure JOY.

Black Women in these United States of America live a brilliant, joyful, soul-filled, precious existence. We catch a glimpse of that JOY every time Kamala Harris or Stacey Abrams smiles—not a practiced for-the-camera smile. No: a wide smile that reaches their eyes, unabashedly splashing JOY onto anyone within range.



I’ve been basking in those joy-filled grins for months because I know it was challenging for them, respectively, to become the first Black Woman Vice-President, and to build the [Fair Fight](#) organization that toppled Georgia’s entrenched political machine. Yes: there’s JOY in being a woman of color.

To be a Black Woman in the U.S. is also excruciating. From cradle to casket, our lives are altered by the twin oppressions of sexism and racism. We live with micro-attacks and macro-aggressions that run through our daily existence unimpeded—like a hot knife through cold butter.

In her seminal text *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), Zora Neale Hurston said it much more eloquently than I: “...black women are the mules of the world.” They carry the load that white men, white women, and black men refuse to carry; they do the work no one wants to do, without praise or thanks.

Last fall we needed to flip two Senate seats in Georgia and evict the President. The mules (and their siblings, Aunties, Uncles, children, etc.) carried the load and changed the world. They stood in lines, wore masks while campaigning, and sent millions of texts, emails, and tweets. Black Queens saved our democracy. We owe them a great deal.

As a child, my mother's kitchen had images of MLK and Jesus adorning the walls. I have photos of MLK and Barack Obama in my house. I've added two images to my walls—Rockwell's "[The Problem We All Live With,](#)" and [the 2020 image,](#) created by Bria Goeller, of Vice President-elect Kamala Harris striding past a wall where her shadow appears as then-6-year-old Ruby Bridges, who integrated her New Orleans elementary school in 1960—and I have Stacey's picture on my altar. They give me JOY. I remember how these folks served our country. Cut their pictures out. Stash them in your wallet. They will bring you JOY too.

### **Prayer**

Source of Sources, Sweet Spirit of Light and Love, help us bear witness to the pain of those we mark as others; unclench our fists so we can applaud the tenacity and triumphs of those we repeatedly marginalize; pour acceptance and strength into our hearts and lead us to share them with those we carelessly exclude and devalue. May it be so. Amen. Ashanti. Blessed Be.



**Rev. [Carol Thomas Cissel](#)**, (M.S., M.Div.), is the settled minister of the UU Fellowship of Centre County in State College, PA. She is passionate about homiletics, crafting exuberant worship, travel, and small batch bourbon. Carol collects the masterworks of both Native American and First Nations...

<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/saving-democracy>

"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

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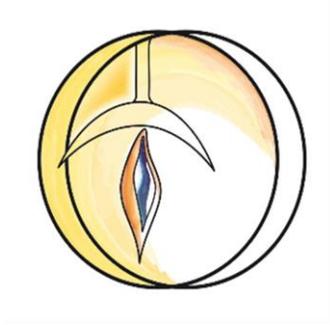
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