

# Powerline

*First Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Niagara*

639 Main Street  
Niagara Falls, NY 14301  
716-285-8381

**June 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 Peter Diachun, Betsy Diachun, and Erica Kopp.

## **Sunday Services**

### **June 6: "Tribalism -- The Good and The Bad"**

It is human nature to congregate into "tribes." At one time, tribalism was a survival technique, nowadays it seems to just divide us. Do we still need our tribes? Can we find a way for a kinder, gentler tribalism that serves both the members of our tribes and those who are not members of our tribes -- or do we work toward a society that doesn't have tribalism? What does tribalism do for our spirituality?

Speaker: Donna Evans-Deyermond  
Coffee Hour: Marge Gillies  
Usher: Kathy McCunn

### **June 13: "Calling all Kids"**

Calling all kids, young an old! Come see what we can do together

Speaker: John Snodgrass  
Coffee Hour Host: Peter Diachun  
Usher: Betsy Diachun

### **June 20: "To Touch God"**

Faith is about believing in things often unseen. How can we know when the divine has been present in our life or world? What tangible touches tell us that God / Spirit is present?

Speaker: Susan Frawley  
Coffee Hour Host: Board  
Usher: Wally Lamb

### **June 27: Summer Program**

## President's Report

We had 2 successful Congregational meetings. In the first one we amended the By Laws to be more inclusive in our "Bond of Fellowship" and to increase the term limit of Trustees to 2 terms.

The second meeting was our Annual Meeting where we approved previous minutes, the financial reports, the proposed budget, received reports written in the Annual Report and presented verbally, and elected Trustees. The following Members were elected to 2 year terms:

Paul Brundage also as President Elect  
Bill Lisk  
Erica Kopp

At the next meeting of the Board the current President Elect, Andrea Galipeau becomes the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Church. Newly elected Trustees and the President Elect assume their Offices at that meeting. New Officers are also appointed.

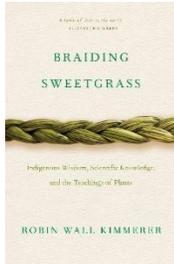
It is with great pleasure and confidence that I hand over the Presidency of the church to Andrea. She has demonstrated skills and leadership which the church is fortunate to have in our new President.

This has been a challenging year for the church because of the Covid virus. I am proud that we resumed safe in-person programs as soon as New York State allowed it last summer and started Zooming them a few months later.

Doing this was demanding on our small Congregation. We have managed, but there is still a lot to be done. Our new leaders will need all of our support. Let's be sure they get it.

Peter

## Book Group



The Book Group had a good discussion about “So You Want to Talk about Race” by Ijeoma Oluo. There’s paperback copy in Unity Hall on the counter below the other books. It was recommended by one of our speakers and she left us copies. This one has some underlining and comments.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, June 24<sup>th</sup> from 4:30 PM to 5:30 PM at the church. We are going to try to Zoom these meetings if people are interested. The book we are reading is “Braiding Sweet Grass” by Robin Wall Kimmerer, who is a professor of Biology. Her work describes the connection between Native American beliefs and plant uses and more scientific methods and ideas. The book is available on-line.

## Our People

**Norm Rowlinson** died on May 17. There will be a service June 6 at 2 PM. Joy may be contacted at 69 Pine Woods Drive, North Tonawanda, NY 14120

## UUA

Exhaling in Community

By [Christine Slocum](#)

May 19, 2021

"Your breath is always with you."

—common meditation prompt

Remember when we used to breathe all over each other? Pre-pandemic, we stood behind each other in the grocery line, chit-chatted before meetings, or sat next to each other in church. There was a clear line of sight to each other's noses, and the sounds of our voices were unobstructed by fabric. My unrestricted exhales didn't put me out of right relationship with those around me.

The virus changed how we understood the consequences of breathing. I used to breathe without thinking. If I was breathing mindfully, it was in the context of meditation or yoga. Breath was life force, or a tool of centering oneself. Now we know: the way we take up space includes where our breath goes.

But breath is also a vector of illness. With over a half a million people deceased, and many in my community, I could not ignore the potential power I had to spread illness. I didn't like how something so fundamental to my being could cause harm. I also couldn't deny it.



Masking up became so normal, I felt naked in public without it. I learned to cross the street whenever I saw anyone on the sidewalk. I chose to forego unneeded interpersonal interaction. It's been a lonely year. My own understanding of personal space aligned with the collective revision to six feet. Even after receiving the vaccine and the requisite time elapsing to immunity, my instincts to avoid other people are still very sharp. I could still harm.

I miss the innocence about how we existed in each other's presence. I miss the ease and lack of caution. What I understood to be true—the safety I perceived—was because I did not have the complete perspective.

Committing to right relationship means being willing to revise our practices when we learn that previously accepted habits might be harmful. It's true of the language we use and the ways we practice power. Now we know: the way we steward our breath matters. I will leave the pandemic with a better understanding of how to protect people around me from illness. May I recognize this awareness as a gift, and use it to express care for the people around me.

### Prayer

May we embrace new understandings of how to be in right relationship to each other, even if we don't like what we learn.



[Christine Slocum](#) (she/her) is a UU whose work facilitates housing for people experiencing homelessness and severe mental illness. She lives in the city of Buffalo with her husband and two children.



Return Service Requested  
June 2021

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara  
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Niagara Falls, NY 14302

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