

# Powerline

*First Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Niagara*

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

**October 2022**

*Learn, Love, Build a Better World*

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Many thanks to our contributors Paul Brundage and Erica Kopp.

## **Sunday Services**

### **October 2: "The Many Forms of Courage"**

The idea/concept of Courage can and does mean many different things to many different people. In this reflection, our speaker will introduce us not only to some courageous people but also some courageous ideas whose time have come.

*Speaker: Ron Skowronski*

*Coffee Hour: Joan Davis*

*Usher: Bill Lisk*

### **October 9: "Longhouse Harvest Time"**

For the Haudenosaunee, Indigenous Peoples of New York, October is a time to celebrate the corn harvest. We'll be exploring the joy (and work!) of the harvest festival, and how it relates to our own feelings about autumn.

*Speaker: John Snodgrass*

*Coffee Hour: Teresa Labuszewski*

*Usher: Patty Lisk*

### **Adult Education Class September 11, 12:30 - 1:30**

### **October 16: "Bringing the Head Beneath the Heart"**

It is human to have an ego -- and we do need our egos to meet the challenges of life. However, if we cannot control our egos and allow our feelings to come through, we will never find inner peace or a place of grace. How do we allow our hearts to fulfill their potential? How do we bend with the vagaries of life so that life does not bend us?

*Speaker: Donna*

*Coffee Hour: Stephen Wittkowsky*

*Usher: Susan Diachun*

**October 23:** "Sukkot"

Fall is a festival of gathering in, harvest, home making. The Jewish festival of sukkot is about creating shelter and raising up the bounty of the season. Let's celebrate harvest, bounty and out faith home

*Speaker: Susan Frawley*

*Coffee Hour: TBA*

*Usher: Kathy McCunn*

**October 30:** "A Milwaukee Memory"

A personal story about moving to Wisconsin twenty years ago, and some hard lessons learned along the way.

*Speaker: John Snodgrass*

*Coffee Hour: Potluck*

*Usher: Pam Smith*

## **President's Report**

I'm looking forward to our next meeting in October to get down to business with the other Board Members. Many thanks again to Peter for helping us keep track of our finances. Finances are good with an increase of about \$8,000.00 in our account balance from Jan 1st to Sept 16th. This is partly due in part because our expenses are low. I'm looking forward see the next financial report from Peter in the near future.

We have open speaker dates currently in progress of being filled. The dates are, March 19 and April 16, 2023.

We also discussed our churches phone system and internet. Bill said we have UMA and Magic Jack. The Magic Jack can call most numbers but the UMA can call all numbers. Currently we are running both but eventually the since the Magic Jack is run by Verizon will run out becoming obsolete, leaving us with UMA.

As far as work on the church building, the elevator gets an annual checkup as well as Sewer Line which was last done last January. I offered to help out and coordinate with Bill on changing filters in each of the furnaces as needed. It's an important preventative maintenance needed upon the onset of winter coming.

We also discussed keeping our building open on Christmas Day morning this year since it is on a Sunday. New Year's Day is on Sunday too January 1st, 2023 and we will be open for anyone who wants to attend.

These are just a few of the things we need to do and in the next few months, we will go forward with these current changes and the ones to come.

President of UU Board - Paul Brundage

## **Potlucks**

We will be having end of month potlucks! Everyone is welcome. Bring a dish to pass if you are able.

## UUA

### Be-coming Out

By [Heather McDuffee](#)

September 28, 2022

"Don't come out unless you want to. Don't come out for anyone else's sake. Don't come out because you think society expects you to. Come out for yourself. Come out to yourself. Shout, sing it. Softly stutter. Correct those who say they knew before you did. That's not how sexuality works, it's yours to define."

—Dean Atta, in *The Black Flamingo*

I don't quite understand why queer folx have to come out. Straight people just bring a person home and introduce them to their parents. And thanks Lady Gaga, but I wasn't really "born this way." I grew this way: like a bent tree, adapting to wind and water, salt and sun. Sexuality is more fluid than we thought.



I did not "come out" on my terms. I was a Christian pastor. I was married to a lovely man and we had two young children. Living my life as a lesbian felt like a poor life choice. Why would I sacrifice my image, my career, and my marriage to explore a thing that seemed immature and impulsive? And would I even like it?

Coming out was a long process for me. I filed for divorce. I broke my family. I moved out. And in the midst of this midlife awakening (or whatever), there was church being all up in my business: me, the lead pastor of a historical, progressive church who had never had a female pastor before. When I asked for privacy, they couldn't do it. Magnificent stories were told about me (I kinda wish some of them were true). Alas, I was outed by progressive Christians.

I still don't know what coming out to a congregation looks like. Do we come out in a sermon? Before the prelude? In the newsletter? No one gets to say what the right way is to come out, not even gay people. The power belongs to the one coming out.

What I want people to know about coming out is that it is deeply spiritual. Hetero people should try it. It is vulnerable, intimate, and holy. There were a few moments when I felt the holy safety of coming out to trusted friends. God makes holy what humans have distorted. Like, when I told my pastoral relations committee, a gay man told me, "I know that it doesn't feel like it yet, but I'm so happy for you. Your life is about to be amazing."

In be-coming out, I lost a lot: my husband, my job, my sense of self. But, thank God, I also gained a lot. And—thank you, John from the pastoral relations committee—I have an amazing life: a new girlfriend, a new definition of family, a new definition of ministry. Be-coming out has been a long process—but it's *my* process. Be-coming out taught me about being human and about being spiritual. Be-coming out shows all people that we can adapt, grow, and emerge victorious.

Prayer: Glittery God, thank you for the vulnerability and intimacy of be-coming out. You were there the whole time, weren't you? You are always there in those moments of telling trusted friends who we are. Thanks for that. Amen.

*Editor's note: Rev. Heather was generous in sharing a [homily-length version](#) of her "be-coming out" story on WorshipWeb.*



**[Heather McDuffee](#)** (she/her) is a United Church of Christ clergy who's passionate about social justice ministry and action. She lives in Colorado with her girlfriend and her two smart and sassy tweenaged girls. Heather loves singing, talking about the Enneagram, looking for art for her next tattoo, hiking with her Chihuahua, listening to '90s hip hop, and trusting God with it all....

<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/be-coming-out>



Return Service Requested  
October 2022

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara  
639 Main Street  
PO Box 2566  
Niagara Falls, NY 14302

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639 Main Street,  
Niagara Falls, NY 14302-2566  
P.O. Box 2566  
(716) 285-8381

E-mail [uuniagara@gmail.com](mailto:uuniagara@gmail.com)  
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