

Powerline

*First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Niagara*

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May 2022

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.

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Many thanks to our contributors Andrea Galipeau, Patricia Lisk, and Erica Kopp.

Sunday Services

May 1: “How to be Humble in an Arrogant World”

In our spiritual discernments we are often reminded to seek humility. Is it a virtue? Is it a value? In this reflection, our speaker will strive to help us discern what authentic humility is and its value in our spiritual and social growth. Consider this an opportunity to “spring clean” your conscience.

Speaker: Ron Skowronski

Coffee Hour: Stephen Wittkowsky & Stewardship Committee

Usher: Susan Diachun

May 8: “Nerdy Words”

The English language is always evolving, adding new words, shedding old ones, and sometimes the meaning of a word can shift over time. Vocabulary is essential to communicate in the present, and also to connect us with the past and future. In what ways can our spiritual journey be aided or restrained by the breadth and depth of our vocabulary?

Speaker: John Snodgrass

Coffee Hour: Shelley Baxter

Usher:

Adult Education Class April 10, 12:30 – 1:30

Shakespeare and the Fairies - an exploration of English Fairylore and how William Shakespeare re-shaped it for *Midsummer Night's Dream*. This will coincide with the release of Snodgrass' new book, *Supernatural Shakespeare: Magic and Ritual in Merry Old England*, which will be available for sale (\$20). It's recommended that you read *Midsummer Night's Dream* or watch a film adaptation before this session. But if not it'll be alright.

May 15: "Pigeon Religion"

There was a study done on pigeon that showed that they developed a ritual to obtain a prize. The pigeons were likened to how humans develop rituals to receive blessings and grace. Let's explore ...pigeon religion

Speaker: Susan Frawley

Coffee Hour:

Usher: Pam Smith

May 22: To Be Announced

Speaker: Ron Skowronski

Coffee Hour: Susan Diachun

Usher: Erica Kopp

May 29: "Honoring Memorial Day"

Coffee Hour: Jim Hufnagel

Usher: Shelley Baxter

Stewardship

"Name That Tune" pledge event Sunday May 1 immediately after the service, followed by a nice lunch. Lots of FUUN fun for everyone!

Thank you from your Stewardship Committee,
Betsy Diachun, Patty Lisk and Teresa Labuszewski

Annual Meeting

Congregational Annual Meeting will be May 22, 2022 at 12:30pm.

Please submit any reports you wish to contribute to the Annual Report from committees to Erica Kopp by May 12, 2022. Email them to ericadkopp@gmail.com

President's Report

Spring is known for being a time of change and hopefulness. If there ever was a time we needed it, I would say it is now.

On the news recently I heard a report about the steep decline of President Biden's approval rating among young democratic voters. I was disturbed as I remember really coming into my voter years around the time when the Democratic Party's platform resounded with the sounds of Hope and Change. Their main reasons for such disapproval are the copious amounts of student debt they face and steadily rising housing costs. From what I understand, both of these problems are due to the growing power that large corporations hold over the American people. Billionaire Tesla CEO Elon Musk having recently acquired the online news and social networking website Twitter is just one example of the immense influence that money has on our daily activities.

Billionaires however, aren't the *only* people whose movements and ideas affect the decisions of people today. More and more I am hearing about 'influencers', people who are considered experts on certain topics who endorse or review products. Others in the community look to them when making their own purchasing choices. Adults and even children can be found on YouTube and Podcasts among other places on the internet, reviewing and critiquing products and services. In fact, they are responsible for the booming sales of several new products on the market as companies are using their names for marketing. Apparently, kids watching *other* kids play with toys is a thing now. [Insert eyeroll here]

While thinking about how I've chosen the wrong career entirely (the 10-year old kid influencer on YouTube Ryan Kaji has a net worth of \$10 billion) I realized that I, too, have the potential to be an influencer. I might not have the time or desire to post a barrage of videos on the internet (the camera does add 10 pounds after all) I can certainly influence those around me and perhaps even those at the "top".

We do not only vote in local and Presidential elections. We vote with our dollars every day. Every dollar we spend supports companies and corporations and we can choose, to an extent, which companies and corporations those are. Ideally the American people would choose to shop at companies that are sustainable and good business models. However, it is true that many of us are limited in our shopping choices due to financial restraints or accessibility. However, there are other ways to boycott, or rather "buycott", the companies we support. I know of many people who circumvent certain websites on the internet, have left particular platforms altogether, or who use apps that rate company practices on a scale of A to F allowing us to choose a more sustainable or better business for our purchasing. I urge you to find a way to consider making even one small change in your life to make this a time of change and hopefulness.

As Anne of Green Gables' author Lucy Maud Montgomery once wrote, "Nothing ever seems impossible in Spring, you know."

For change and for hope,
Andrea

UUA

We Keep Rising in Love

By Molly Housh Gordon

April 6, 2022

“When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus’ body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, ‘Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?’ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.”

–Mark 16:1-5 (NRSV)

The women were there, to the very end. They watched as his body was taken down and wrapped in linen and placed in a tomb. I imagine them wailing, keening... or perhaps their limbs felt as heavy as their hearts. Perhaps you, too, have experienced that spectrum from raging to frozen grief.

The earliest telling of the story ends in bewilderment, for the women of the story and for the reader alike: “Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.”

Could Jesus really rise again? Could it really be that the violence of empire and the pain of loss would be denied the final word? In that ancient telling, we don’t get an answer. There is no resolution. There is no certainty. There is only a seed of complicated hope and the persistence of human love to help it grow.

What strikes me about the ancient text is that it was not only Jesus who rose up that morning. It was also the women who loved him, who rose up from the pit of their grief to tend to him. It was also the movement that his teaching sparked: a community who rose up to spread his message of power in weakness and the victory of love.

Is new life possible? Is love stronger, even, than death? The question itself invites us to rise up, and to live as though it were true—to make it true in our living.

The lesson for the women, for the forces of Empire, for us is this: You can crush Love down, bury it, cover it over, but it will rise. It will reach for the sun, and we will reach for each other.

Love will have the final word, even if that word is just a question, a wild possibility, a whisper to rise and follow wherever it may lead. Communities formed and nurtured in love will rise up for and with each other again and again.



If we've learned nothing else these years, it is this: Even when everything is uncertain, even when we are grieving, even when the loss keeps coming, even when we are forced apart, even when we are bone-weary, we keep reaching for one another. We keep rising in love.

Prayer

Source of love, rise as the spring in our overwintered hearts. Help us stretch from the dark and nourishing soil to the bright and nurturing sunlight. Help us reach one another. Love us back to life in all its fullness as we blossom and unfold amid days that will always contain beauty and terror alike. No matter what else they may hold, may each day contain impossible, inexorable, blooming love. Amen.



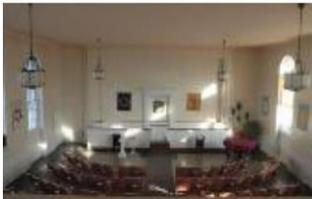
The Rev. [Molly Housh Gordon](#) is a lifelong Unitarian Universalist from Tulsa, Oklahoma. A graduate of Harvard Divinity School, she serves as minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia, Missouri, where she is passionate about community organizing, theology, and the warmth and fire of...

<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/we-keep-rising-love>



Return Service Requested
May 2022
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First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara
Facilities available for Wedding Services,
Receptions, and Celebrations



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