

Powerline

*First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Niagara*

February 2025

639 Main Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14301
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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 or click the link. Please spread the word.

Sunday Services

February 2: “I Am with You... Always”

In these awkward, uncertain times, we long for a true sense of direction. Our speaker believes that without an authentic sense of inclusion, we will have a long struggle ahead of us. Unitarian-Universalist Inclusion is a path to freedom. Let us come find out how.

Speaker: Ron Skowronski

Coffee Hour: Teresa Labuszewski

Usher: Wally Lamb

February 9: “Going Spiral”

Years after our release from Covid isolation, the virus continues to divide us. What could have been a shared experience with a lesson of unity instead fragmented us further, until it becomes difficult to feel we even inhabit a shared reality.

Adult Education Class, February 9, 12:30 – 1:30

Speaker: John Snodgrass

Coffee Hour: Erica Kopp

Usher: Wally Lamb

February 16: “Getting Back to the Basics”

A discussion of Unitarian Universalist values, why they are even more important at this time of our history, and what we can do to uphold these values in our greater communities.

*Linda Stricker presents **American Religious Liberty**, Part 1 of 4, February 16, 12:40 – 1:30*

Speaker: Donna Evans-Deyermond

Coffee Hour: Susan Diachun

Usher: Wally Lamb

February 23: "Love thy neighbor as thyself"

With this idea of loving our neighbors, how are we loving ourselves? And if we are not loving ourselves, it makes it harder to love neighbors and strangers. Let explore how to love ourselves and extend that to the world around us.

Speaker: Susan Frawley

Coffee Hour: Pot luck

Usher: Wally Lamb

President's Report

As we continue through the winter months, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of our church community.

First, I am pleased to report that our finances remain stable, allowing us to continue our mission without immediate concerns. Thank you to everyone who contributes their time, talents, and resources to keep our congregation thriving.

A special thank you goes out to Bill, who has been keeping all of our technology, audio, and visual systems running smoothly. His efforts ensure that our services and programs continue without interruption, and we are truly grateful for his expertise.

I also want to extend our appreciation to Jim, who has been keeping the snow plowed and our walkways clear. His work ensures that everyone can safely access the building, even during these snowy months.

Looking ahead, our **next board meeting is scheduled for February 22**. As always, all are welcome to attend and participate in the discussion.

Thank you all for your continued support and dedication to our church community. Let's continue working together to make this a warm and welcoming place for all.

Erica

Lecture Series: The Evolution of American Religious Liberty

Join us for a compelling four-part lecture series on *American Religious Liberty*, presented by **Linda Stricker** at our church. This series will explore the landmark Supreme Court cases that have shaped the relationship between Church and State in the United States.

Guided by the Religion Clauses of the First Amendment—*"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."*—this series will bring to life the real-world struggles, debates, and legal battles that defined religious freedom.

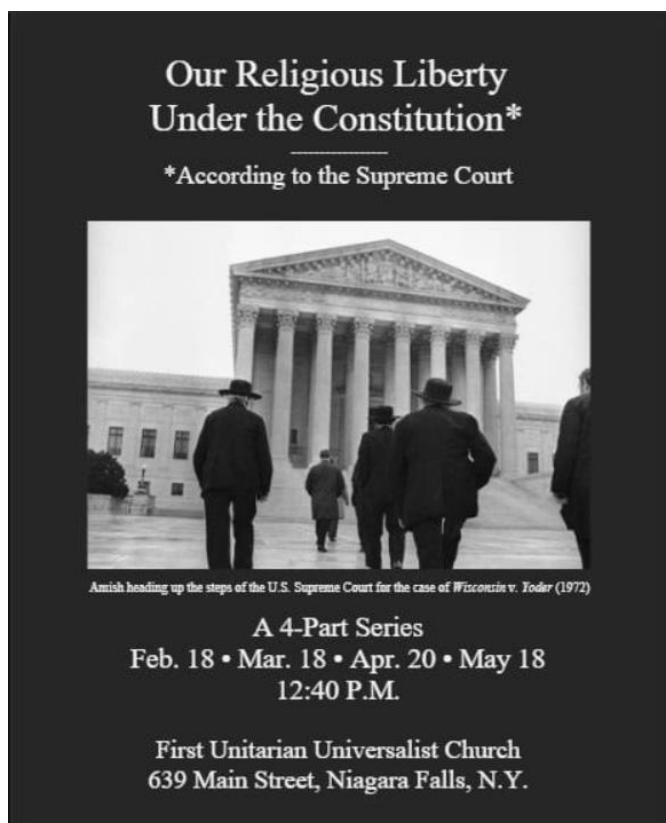
Drawing from extensive research, including a master's thesis on the Free Exercise Clause, newspaper articles, and conference presentations, Linda Stricker will examine how the Supreme Court has set legal precedents, reversed itself, and navigated the evolving boundaries between government and faith.

Through engaging case studies, we'll explore how and why our freedoms have expanded and contracted over time, and where the balance between Church and State stands today.

Lecture Dates:

- **February 18**
- **March 18**
- **April 20**
- **May 18**

Time: 12:40 PM – 1:30 PM



**Our Religious Liberty
Under the Constitution***

**According to the Supreme Court*

Amish heading up the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court for the case of *Wisconsin v. Toder* (1972)

A 4-Part Series
Feb. 18 • Mar. 18 • Apr. 20 • May 18
12:40 P.M.

First Unitarian Universalist Church
639 Main Street, Niagara Falls, N.Y.

UUA

Anchored to Hope

By Oscar Sinclair

January 29, 2025

“[Hope] transcends the world that is immediately experienced, and is anchored somewhere beyond its horizons. Hope...is not the same as joy that things are going well...but, rather, an ability to work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed.”

—Vaclav Havel

My apartment looks out on the Mississippi River, where I watch barges travel back and forth each morning. But on nights when I wake up after midnight, scared and uncertain about what the months and years ahead will hold, I find my mind drifting from river barges back to my adopted hometown of Baltimore, of oceans and sailing ships.

Usually I think of anchors as something to keep us in place, to hold us steady as the world around us moves. But there's at least one other use for an anchor. Imagine an old sailing ship: on a big, 150-foot schooner, there aren't any motors or oars on the boat itself. The ship is designed to work with the wind; when you're out in the open sea with the wind at your back, it cuts through the waves fast and straight.



But how does the ship get out of port? What do you do when the wind isn't at your back, but coming straight at your face? Maybe you're stuck, no wind to be had at all.

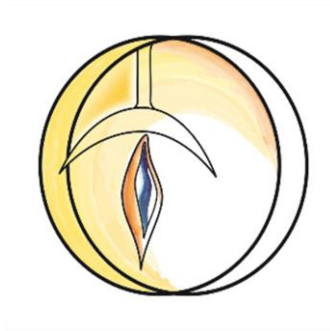
There's at least one other way to use an anchor, called warping. The crew of a becalmed ship would take a kedge anchor and put it in a rowboat. A crew rowed it as far as they could out in front of the ship, and dropped the anchor. The crew aboard the ship hauled on the anchor—not bringing it up, but bringing the ship slowly overtop of the anchor. Then they pulled the anchor up, put it back on the rowboat, and repeated the process. It's not fast, and it takes an enormous amount of work from many people working together, but in this way even the largest sailing ship can move forward without any wind.

I think of an anchor as a kind of motivation when the wind is against us. Hope doesn't require that the wind be at our backs; it's not moored to a certain understanding of the experienced world. Hope is challenging, if not impossible, to grasp alone. Hope, in this sense, is a discipline to anchor myself to something that I can't quite grasp yet, but I trust is there—and a discipline to pull towards that goal together, one day at a time.

Prayer

God of all that is spoken and all held too close to be said aloud, help us to hold on to hope. When we find ourselves becalmed, remind us to drop an anchor over the horizon; pull along with us as we haul toward a more hopeful horizon.

<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/anchored-hope>



Return Service Requested
February 2025

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639 Main Street
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Niagara Falls, NY 14302

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara
Facilities available for Wedding Services,
Receptions, and Celebrations



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