

Powerline

*First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Niagara*

April 2025

639 Main Street
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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

April 6: “When Jesus became a clear and present danger”

The figure of Jesus at Easter time was once a symbol of joy and hope. With the manifestation of Christian Nationalism, those times have changed. Our speaker will draw the distinctions between what Jesus actually taught and what is being taught by those who hijacked his image and faith. Reflections on Marcus Borg, John Shelby Spong, and Unitarian-Universalist teachers will add to the mix of interesting points of view.

Speaker: Ron Skowronski

Coffee Hour: Stewardship

Usher: Kathy McCunn

April 13: “A Whale of a Tale”

What was the seamonster "Leviathan" in the Bible? Why did it have to be slain, and did the people really eat it? We'll be looking at this mythical beast and some of its ancient relatives

Adult Education Class, April 13, 12:30 – 1:30

Speaker: John Snodgrass

Coffee Hour: Stephen Wittkowsky

Usher: Kathy Mccunn

April 20: “Spring Back into Life”

This Sunday, as Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, we UU's celebrate our own form of resurrection: coming out of the dark days of winter into the light of spring, resurrecting our own lights into new forms of ourselves, and renewing our commitment to building a better world.

Speaker: Donna Evans-Deyermond

Coffee Hour: Erica Kopp, Adult Easter Egg Hunt

Usher: Kathy McCunn

April 27: "Channel of Disturbance"

From the prayer of St Francis which asks that we be made a channel of peace, these times call for being a channel of disturbance. How do we do that and hold to our UU values? Come to church and find out.

Speaker: Susan Frawley

Coffee Hour: Potluck

Usher: Kathy McCunn

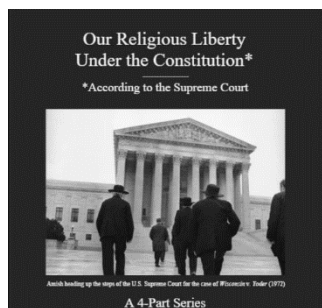
Lecture Series: The Evolution of American Religious Liberty

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.



Part Three

April 27, 2025

Time: 12:40 PM – 1:30 PM

President's Report

I'm pleased to share a brief update on church matters from this past month.

We recently gathered for a beautiful Life Celebration service in honor of Betsy Diachun. It was a heartfelt and meaningful occasion that reflected the love and care within our community.

On the administrative side, I'm happy to report that our finances remain stable and in good standing. The church building also continues to be in good condition with no major concerns at this time.

Looking ahead, I'm excited about the possibility of hosting another church dinner this summer. These gatherings are always a highlight of the year, offering a wonderful opportunity for fellowship and connection.

Erica

Annual Meeting

We are pleased to announce that our Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, May 18, 2025, immediately following the church service. This important gathering offers an opportunity for all members to come together to reflect on our collective achievements over the past year and to discuss our vision and plans for the future. Your participation is highly valued as we make decisions that will guide our congregation in the coming year. We look forward to your attendance and to sharing this time of fellowship and planning with you.

UUA

UA Joins Multifaith Lawsuit Asserting That ICE Policy Violates the First Amendment February 11, 2025

On February 11, a multifaith coalition and the [Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection](#) announced that they had filed a lawsuit challenging ICE's "sensitive locations policy." Churches (along with schools and hospitals) had previously been protected from the agency's enforcement actions, but a Department of Homeland Security memo rescinded that protection on January 20th.

"Our sacred spaces must continue to offer sanctuary to those who face oppression, violence, or alienation, including immigrant communities."

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) is proud to announce that we are a plaintiff in this lawsuit. We join this multifaith coalition to challenge the ending of ICE's sensitive locations policy, and oppose any interpretation of law which would allow immigration raids in houses of worship and religious ceremonies.

The suit asserts that subjecting places of worship to ICE enforcement actions without a judicial warrant substantially burdens our religious exercise in violation of the First Amendment and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). These enforcement actions at our places of worship interfere with our religious activities and our ability to fulfill our religious mandate to welcome and serve immigrants.

Of the lawsuit, the UUA's Executive Vice President Carey McDonald said, "As Unitarian Universalists (UUs), fighting for justice and liberation for all people is at the heart of our faith tradition, which recognizes the spark of the divine inherent in every person; our sacred spaces must continue to offer sanctuary to those who face oppression, violence, or alienation, including immigrant communities.

UUs are united in our commitment through a set of shared religious values, which include interdependence, pluralism, justice, equity, generosity, and transformation, all of which revolve around Love at the center. Compelled by those values, we will continue to do what Unitarians and Universalists have done throughout our centuries-long history - use our voices and our actions to side with love and help those who are in the greatest need."

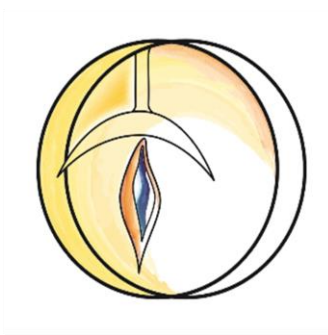
UU congregations include members who are immigrants, both documented and undocumented. Many of our congregations provide social ministries that serve immigrant communities in church spaces, such as through food and diaper distribution, ESL classes, a migrant-focused early learning program, and other tutoring and skill-building. And a large proportion of our congregations are located near the coasts, U.S.-Mexico or U.S.-Canada borders, or in cities where immigration-enforcement actions have recently occurred.

For Further Reading

- Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection (ICAP) Press Release: [More Than Two Dozen Christian and Jewish Denominations and Associations Sue to Protect Religious Freedoms \(PDF, 7 pages\)](#)
- UU World: [UUA, Other Religious Groups Sue Trump Administration to Halt Immigration Arrests at Houses of Worship](#)

For more information contact pr@uua.org.

<https://www.uua.org/pressroom/press-releases/sensitive-locations-policy-lawsuit>



Return Service Requested
April 2025

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



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uuniagara@gmail.com with the subject "Powerline"*