

Powerline

First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Niagara

August 2018

639 Main Street
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Learn, Love, Build a Better World

Contents

Sunday Programs	2
President's Message.....	3
Visual Art	4
Showing Up For Racial Justice	4
UUA.....	5



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 Teresa Labuszewski, Erica Kopp, and Betsy Diachun.

Sunday Programs

Summer Programs are Sundays 11:00 – 12:00



Hear Ye! Hear Ye! There will be a church picnic on Sunday, August 12, after the service. around 12:30 - 1, It will be held at Marge Gillies, 1175 Oak Place, Niagara Falls. Oak Place is in La Salle along the creek. a short little

street. We will have directions at church on that Sunday and will share rides as needed. Marge's phone is: 283-8829. Marge will supply hot dogs, hamburgers and condiments. Attendees are asked to bring a dish to pass, their drinks and lawn chairs. Parking can be in the driveway and on the creek side of the street.

Water Ceremony

Sunday, Sept. 9, we will again end our Water Ceremony with a flourish - a free ride on the Maid of the Mist. Before then we must have an exact count of attendees. We will have a sheet in the Narthex at the



beginning of August for sign-ins or you can call Betsy Diachun 754-2830 or e-mail: ediachun@gmail.com. Please leave names of all planning to go on the boat tour! We will plan to walk or drive down and meet by the Maid of the Mist Ticket Booths.

President's Message

We had our Board retreat recently, with the purpose of getting to know each other better and to come up with a vision for the year ahead. I learned a lot about our new board members as they shared their past struggles and the concerns they have for our church. I then shared the story of a small town that had lost large numbers of their population when several large corporations closed up shop. Young people left by droves, leaving an older population behind. They had to bus children an hour away and close the local high school. At the town meetings, people were panicking, trying to come up with ways to attract new residents to keep up the tax base and to be able to pay for and offer services to townspeople. The mayor suggested something radical after several meetings with no solutions. He suggested that they all pitch in together to help one another and better use the resources that they had. They turned the old high school into a community center. Locals took turns cleaning, staffing phones and maintenance duties. People who had hobbies taught classes to interested townspeople for free. Book clubs were started. There was a tea every afternoon to just get together.

In a few years, people from nearby suburbs who were commuting to a bigger city, began to see the change in the townspeople. How friendly they were, how helpful to each other, how pretty the town looked when everyone pitched in to paint someone's home who could not hire a professional painter. Little fairies mowed lawns and weeded gardens and took delight in people wondering who had done the good deed. People got to know this town as a place where it is good to live because there are good caring people. And some of them moved there from the suburbs, choosing to drive a bit further to be around helpful caring people. It wasn't magic. They did not all live happily ever after. But they lived better by working together.

This is my vision for our church. Sunday services and speakers do not appear miraculously out of the blue. Church members set things up. I have great hope in the numbers that have come to the lay led summer services. I propose that we form a programming committee, with Betsy and Peter Diachun as mentors to some dedicated volunteers. Getting together and talking about who we would like to see in the pulpit, what sort of topics we want to hear about, can be fun and interesting. Let's emulate that town and pitch in together and not expect the other guy to do it.

I also had a conversation with a member who said that the state of the world is awful and that there was nothing one could do about it. I was surprised but not surprised. Anxiety levels in this country are high with all of the discord being sown. If instead, we said, "Let's get out the vote to change our government" and perhaps partnered with the League of Women Voters or some such organization, we might make a difference. At least we would have tried. And in the trying, we might find relief from anxiety. Inaction and worry are not the way for us to go. Let's work together in the coming year to make our church community even better, a place that people want to be.

I believe in you.

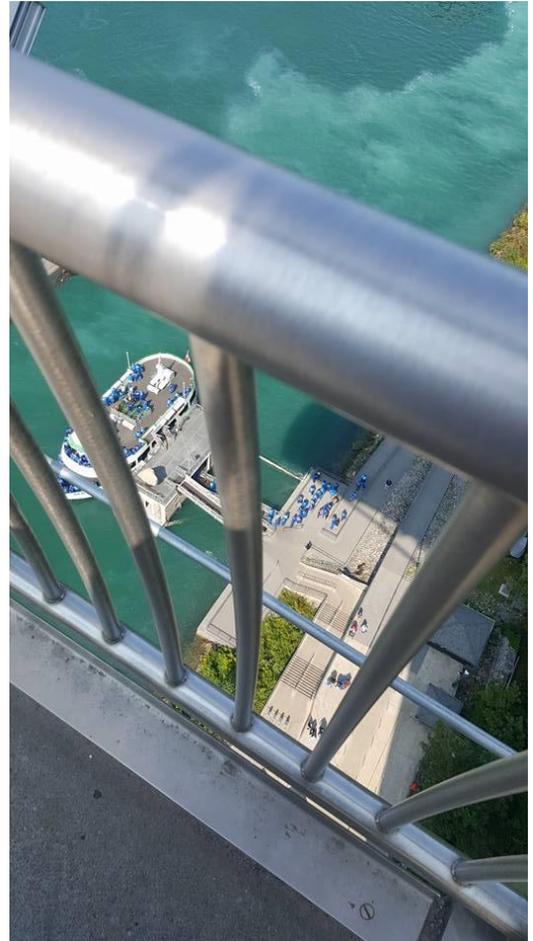
Teresa Labuszewski

Visual Art

2017 September: The Ultimate Water Ceremony



Photos by
Erica Kopp



Showing Up For Racial Justice

SURJ is a national group with an affiliate in Buffalo. They are interested in expanding into Niagara County and are using our church as a meeting place and staging area. They are meeting here from 5:30 to 8:30 on the following dates if anyone would like to join them and learn more about their mission: Tuesday, August 7, and Thursday, August 16. On these dates they will be canvassing the area to learn more about the effect of white supremacy on the neighborhood. On Sunday, August 12, they are planning a Vigil starting at 5 PM in remembrance of the Charlottesville, VA protest which occurred a year ago. If you have questions you may contact Drew at 716-510-7086.

Home, Again

By Teresa Honey Youngblood
June 6, 2018

“Some things will never change. Some things will always be the same. Lean down your ear upon the earth and listen.”

—Thomas Wolfe, *You Can't Go Home Again* (1940)

They don't call it heat lightning here. They don't call them Hurricane lilies, either. And the early summer frog songs feature some familiar voices, but the one that sounds like a grumpy little dog barking is missing. The Ozarks are just as stunning as everyone said they were, but they're not the wild swamplands of Florida that we left behind.

Stubbornly, I point out these discrepancies to my children, willing them to remember the vocabulary of our shared homeland. But when we left, they were of such an age that they hadn't yet built up such loyalties, and after a while they look at me with benign tolerance when I describe to them the smell of orange blossoms that floated through the open window as I sang them to sleep, or the way they'd gorge on juicy u-pick persimmons until their small stomachs bulged so much I had to adjust their carseat buckles on the ride home. They don't share my memories. They hear them like words from a story that trails off nebulously. “Then what happened?” “Well, then we moved...”

People move places for jobs, relations, opportunities, escape. We also move from partnered to single, or we move from an empty nest to raising grandchildren, or from able-bodied to disabled. The shorthand of our life-before becomes cumbersome, unable to connect us to the people around us, hindering our ability to put down new roots.

And yet, we carry a constancy: the still, quiet voice within that knows the difference between the window dressing and the big, wide, beautiful world beyond the window. We feed this wise little voice with prayer: breath, song, service, bare feet walking circles on the ground, slow-cooked soup, gentle gazes held when words fail.

Prayer

Great Spirit, help us to remember we are already at home anywhere we may be on the interconnected web of all existence, that we are never untethered from the Oneness that abides all space and time.

<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/home-again>

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara
Facilities available for Wedding Services,
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"Singles Social Club" established over 36 years ago. We are a friendly group that welcomes newcomers to our activities, game nights, dances, picnics, restaurants and much more....come join us! (Ages ranging 50 to 80 years old now, but all welcome) Call for more info 716-550-1232. Find us on facebook: Singles Social

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