

Powerline

First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Niagara

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January 2018

Learn, Love, Build a Better World

Contents

Sunday Programs	2
President's Message.....	3
Announcements.....	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.

It's a simple one step process: Just email your request to uuniagara@gmail.com or click the link. Please spread the word.

Many thanks to our contributors Teresa Labuszewski, Erica Kopp, and Betsy Diachun.

Sunday Programs

January 6: "Christmas is a Love Story"

The words of a South African Methodist Minister

Betsy Diachun

Coffee hour: After church on Sunday, January 6, rather than having a coffee hour, we will be having a party to say farewell to our friend Judy Bongiovanni. Judy will be moving to southern Pennsylvania sometime later this month. Come celebrate her life with us so she'll have lots of memories to take away with her.

Usher: Teresa Labuszewski

January 13: "SCIENCE AND RELIGION"

What we call "Science" and "Religion" seem to be locked in an eternal struggle for the authority to make meaning in our lives. But for most of human history they were the same thing. How did they split apart? And how can they be reconciled?

John Snodgrass

Coffee hour: Erica Kopp

Usher: Shelley Baxter

January 20: "Taking the anger out of stranger"

Much of our world has become a place of mistrust and aggression towards those not known. Inherent worth and dignity is not always the first response. Exploring anger as a response and changing how we view those whom we do not know will be a special sacred journey this Sunday

Susan Frawley

Coffee hour:

Usher: Erica Kopp

January 27: "Essential for Our Future"

Hope is a rare gift. With it we open ourselves to the future. Without it.....?

Rev Don Reidell

Coffee hour: Joan Davis

Usher: Paul Brundage

President's Message

I spent Christmas at my parents' house, and, as usual, they had the television on all day. They have no internet, no streaming-good old antenna TV, commercials and all. My dad's remote is quite worn out-well, the mute button is worn out. When a commercial comes on, he hits the mute button and reads. Commendable, unless you are watching with him, because he gets engrossed in what he is reading and doesn't unmute-and then you have to ask him to turn the show back on. No one else is allowed to touch the remote because of their antenna situation-we screw up his reception. Anyway, I saw a Burger King commercial that said "Some people say less is more. But look at the size of this burger and this order of fries compared to our competitor's. More is clearly more. More is better." I got to thinking about how we have come to a place where more is better and what that means for us. People who stream their content get targeted ads, and now social media is selling our information to target us so personally that we often don't think of ads as ads, but as personal recommendations made by our Facebook "friends". I wondered what happened to quality over quantity. What is wrong with a few well made pair of shoes as opposed to dozens of cheap shoes that fall apart or are uncomfortable? Do we think about what the people who make those cheap shoes earn? How many of us buy stuff because it's "on sale", not because we need it and when it falls apart say, oh well, it only cost me \$5.00?

These are the things that ran through my mind as Pablo and I went for our walk the day after Christmas. You could tell it was the first garbage day after Christmas-the boxes being recycled were many and stupendous. Somehow, we think we can consume our way out of our unhappiness and discontent. As a nation, we are less fit, more depressed, take more drugs, spend more on health care with mixed results, and have more gun deaths than any other Western nation. We think friends are people who "like" us on Facebook and feel successful if we have hundreds or thousands of followers on Twitter.

My real friends, let's go back to owning a few well made items, let's use smaller plates with better quality food on them, let's get outdoors and move our bodies they way they were meant to be moved as we are able, let's actually talk to one another face to face in real time about things that are important to us. Let's be grateful for our beloved church community and support one another in the year to come with our time, love and treasure. We belong to a very special place with very special people. We are small, but we can be what the world needs now.

I believe in you,

Teresa Labuszewski

Announcements

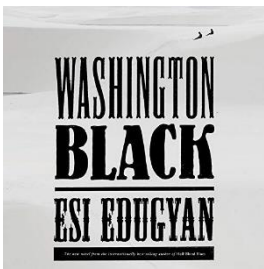
Judy

ON Sunday, Jan. 6, there will be a Farewell party for Judy Bongiovanni who is moving to southern Pennsylvania, immediately after church. Come and share your memories of Judy.

New Renters

Starting January 13, The Reformed Spiritualist Church will be renting Unity Hall on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month for their service. They will be using the room from 3PM to 5PM Any church member who wishes to attend their service is invited and encouraged to do so.

Book Group now meeting Wednesdays



Book Group will meet on Wednesday, January 16 from 4:30 to 5:30 PM in Unity Hall. The fiction book being read this month is Washington Black by Esi Edugyan. The group is small and encourages people to come for philosophical discussions – whether one has read the book or not.

UUA

Wanting to Break Free

January 16, 2018

"Remember to get carried away. To be grounded is for plants."
—Tarriona "Tank" Ball, Tank and the Bangas

I'm often accused of being "too reserved," and there's truth at the heart of that. On the spiciness scale, my expressiveness is on the mild end. I'm sure that stems from my disdain for being the center of attention. Still, I'm frequently advised to "loosen up," and offered the clarification, "That was a joke."

It makes sense. As children, the older Black folks around would warn us to not "show our color." Later, I learned to not be too feminine either—whatever that means. These responses are clearly rooted in fear. Just to be clear, I don't mean to minimize the reality that authentic self-expression is still often bold and dangerous for too many people. But fear, however justifiable, is central. So, here I now am, unable to fully live into the freedom of self-expression for fear that I might not be taken seriously.

Like many people, I discovered Tank and the Bangas through their [2017 NPR Tiny Desk Concert](#). I immediately fell in love, so when one of my choir members informed me they'd be performing a concert in town, I quickly bought a ticket.

When the concert finally came, I loved it. However, I didn't dance or scream, sing along or... do much of anything beyond standing there and soaking it all in. That didn't feel strange to me, at least not in a conscious way.

At the end of the concert, while saying goodnight to the noisy and appreciative crowd, the band's lead said, "Remember to get carried away. To be grounded is for plants."

She was speaking directly to me. She clearly wasn't... but she was, and I felt it.

The following Sunday, our congregation opened worship with the hymn "[I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me](#)." I wanted so badly to break free and let loose on it. However, looking out at our (we'll call them) upright congregation, I just couldn't. Most of them wouldn't have minded, but still: I was stuck in my own false ideas of their expectations of me.

Luckily, as with many of life's developments, there's still time.

Prayer

That which is in us and all around us and which constantly draws us to our holiest selves, remind me that my freedom, fully expressed, gives freedom to others. As I wander among the trees, accept my silent gratitude for not having their stationary life. And, most of all, please remove from me any tendency, by action or in spirit, to quiet the expression of others. Amen.



About the Author: DeReau K. Farrar is director of music at First Unitarian Church of Portland, Oregon, and a member of the board and conference planning committee of the Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network. Before moving to Portland in 2016, he served UU congregations in Santa Monica and Los Angeles, California, led an interfaith community gospel choir, and worked as a freelance music director, vocal contractor, consultant, and arranger. He worked on HBO's *All the Way* (2016) and Jordan Peele's *Get Out* (2017).

<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/wanting-break-free>

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