

Powerline

First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Niagara

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February 2019

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.

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

Sunday Programs

February 3: “Time Travel & the Production of Happiness”

The Mindfulness movement is everywhere these days, prompting many of us to try new techniques for living in the present moment. But is living in the present really the best way to ensure human happiness? What does Buddhist wisdom have to say about how we should live?

Kristina Church

Coffee hour: Betsy Diachun

Usher: Linda Hurley

February 10: “DIVINING THE WEATHER”

We are accustomed to thinking of weather as an impersonal force, narrated by scientists using satellite images. But for most of human history, seasons had personalities and signs to be read on earth. As we settle into winter, we'll briefly look at some ancient customs of predicting and influencing the arrival of Spring.

John Snodgrass

Coffee hour: Shelley Baxter

Usher: Stephen Wittkowsky

February 17: “What’s Prayer Got to Do with It?”

Do Unitarian Universalists pray? What role does prayer play in your life? To whom/what do you pray? Let’s talk about this ancient, everyday practice.

Sally Hamlin

Coffee hour: Patty and Bill Lisk

Usher: Susan Dicahun

February 24: “Essential for Our Future”

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

Rev Don Reidell

Coffee hour: Joy and Norm Rowlinson

Usher: Pat Velky

President's Message

I think liberal religion is important. As Unitarian Universalists, we should be proud of our inclusive stance in America. We were the first American religion to have ordained a woman. We were heavily involved in abolition, civil rights and now immigration and LGBTQ rights. We have invited people of other faiths to join us as long as they can agree to our 7 principles. We welcome agnostics and atheists, as long as they can agree with our 7 principles. We live in the here and now, believing that what we do here, in this life on this earth, is what is important.

There is not a lot of liberal religion in Niagara County. We need to tend to our world and to each other. In order to do this, we need to re examine our place in the world. What is a church in the 21st century? How do we provide community, support and guidance to each other and even more importantly, how do we do this for future generations? Young people are thirsty for community. They feel anxious and alone. But the word church is anathema to them. And who can blame them when we see the scandals and abuse that take place in churches. They turn to social media for comfort, but that often turns into a community that gangs up on them and bullies. Suicide rates among young people are at record high levels. We need to communicate somehow that face to face in person contact is good and useful, that it provides a feeling of belonging and safety. Sometimes a real time smile and a handshake or hug can make all the difference for someone. But we also have to take their needs, likes and interests into account. Sometimes we can be boring to them. How to include and mentor without lecturing?

On February 10th during coffee hour, I would like us to come together and discuss how we might improve our Sunday morning experience. We have someone in the pulpit for the rest of this year- we look forward to learning from these speakers. But we need to look to next year and the future after that. We need multiple people looking for speakers. There are all sorts of small and large colleges and universities in our area that have grad students and adjunct professors in philosophy, religious studies, history, psychology who might be interested in speaking for 20 minutes. And we are not wedded to a church service that follows a formula. If someone does not want to sing hymns, there are all sorts of other music that is inspirational. Perhaps we can go online to the Church of the Larger Fellowship, whom our friend, Bob Lavalley worked with, for a Sunday morning.

Our Sunday morning programming is important to how we think, how we are perceived in the community, what we stand for. Without a minister, we are responsible for that content. We cannot continue to rely on a few for this – it is a big job for a few, but a small job for many working together. If we want to continue with good programming, if we want to be inspired, we all need to participate and contribute ideas and time. Please think about who and what you would like to hear on a Sunday morning. We could even consider taking some road trips instead of the traditional Sunday service, car pooling so no one is left out. I encourage you to bring your ideas and participate after church on February 10th. We are the church. Let's be great and kind and encouraging and wise, working together for the good of us all.

I believe in you,
Teresa Labuszewski



Niagara Falls January 2019
Posted by the Facebook page “Natural Niagara Falls”

Announcements

BAZAAR NEWS **CHRISTMAS IN JULY**

We are going to have our Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, July 20, 2019.

Any and all help will be needed.

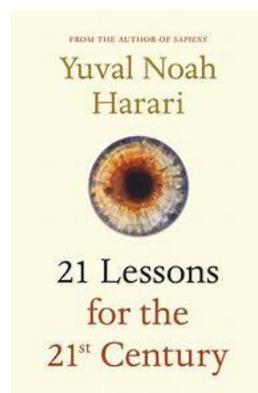
I'm hoping our gardeners will provide plants for a plant sale. I should be able to provide some pots to help. Hoping our bakers will provide breads, cookies, and other wonderful edible items. Hoping our musicians will provide some fun (or FUUN) music on the front porch. We'll have a basket auction, and hot dog sale. An Artists' corner...with beautiful handmade art and antiques. Of course a yard sale.

Please read your Powerlines and weekly announcements for more information as July gets closer. 716-550-1438. Thanx, Marie

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, February 20 from 4:30 to 5:30 PM in Unity Hall. The nonfiction book being read this month is 21 Lessons for the 21st Century by Yuval Noah Harari. The group is small and encourages people to come for philosophical discussions – whether one has read the book or not.

UUA

Finding Our Way Out

By Karen G. Johnston

January 23, 2019

I pray to the birds because I believe they will carry the messages of my heart upward... I pray to the birds because they remind me of what I love, rather than what I fear.

—Terry Tempest Williams, in *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place*

An earnest six-year-old once informed me that hummingbirds must have nectar every ten minutes, so I knew the situation was urgent. I had walked into an empty, old house that was not entirely empty: a hummingbird, trapped inside, was frantically trying to get out the quickest way it knew how: follow the light, head for the sky. Yet window panes would not yield.

The front door already open, I opened another wide, hoping to increase the chance of escape. The bird, its wings a thrumming blur, moved away from the window. For the briefest moment, I thought it might find its escape.

It did not. Instead, it flew further into the house, drawn to a different window. I climbed awkwardly on the back of a couch next to the window. When I reached the high sash, I beheld the hummingbird: a worrisome lack of motion. It was alive, but exhausted.

I took the bird in the nest of my two human hands. As I cupped my hands around this tiny, sentient being, it yielded. There was not much else it could do.

Such is the case with surrender: it is the last thing, often the only thing, available. And so we give ourselves to it. We fear it is our end. Sometimes—with grace or luck—we find it is our liberation.

I walked that bird to the outside, stopping at a tall, branch-laden bush. I stuck my hands into its depths and opened them wide. In the time it took my heart to skip a beat, that bird jumped into the nest of the bush, then into the world beyond.

Surely this was a time for exaltation—yet I found myself sobbing, surrendering to a crest of emotion I could not name then, still cannot name now, but could only ride and allow to flow through me.

Prayer: Spirit of Life and Love, may we all find our way out of the walls that keep us in. May we find our way out into the world that holds our collective liberation, so tender, so dire. May we—at birth, throughout life, and in death—surrender with humility and curiosity. May we be reminded of what we love, rather than what we fear.



About the Author: Karen G. Johnston is the settled minister at The Unitarian Society in East Brunswick, NJ. Before becoming a minister, she spent 20+ years as a clinical social worker. Buddhist meditation and a befriending death practices sustain her, as does her delightful dog, Vera, and a blessed abundance of other..

. <https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/finding-our-way-out>

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara
Facilities available for Wedding Services,
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"Singles Social Club" established over 40 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 Club

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