

October 2018

Grace Notes

The Monthly Journal of First Unitarian Universalist Church

Sanctuary

the practice of finding sacred space within
and ensuring welcoming space for all

From the Minister
Rev. Luke Stevens-Royer



The line between safety and danger,
fear and comfort,
sanctuary and abandonment –
can be quite thin.

Just one change, one moment, one mistake, and *-wham-*
life changes.

Sanctuary is an ancient idea – space set to holy use –
refuge, safety, safe harbor, renewal, respite.

Over the years, it has meant a place for the worship
of holy ideas and holy items –
it has meant a place for refuge and safety for the
oppressed from the empire –
it has meant a place set aside, protected,
for the flourishing of life and animals and earth and soil
and sky.

I think we still need all of that in our lives, and our world.

Think about a time when you have been in a storm –
whether it be rolling thunder across a prairie in the heat of summer
or the frigid wind, across the same prairie, in the frozen winter –
whether it be hail, or blizzard snow –
there is a moment –
when you move out into it,
or just make your way out of it,
when you realize the line between safety and harm is thin.

So it is with our lives –
spiritual, physical, emotional, psychological, geographical.

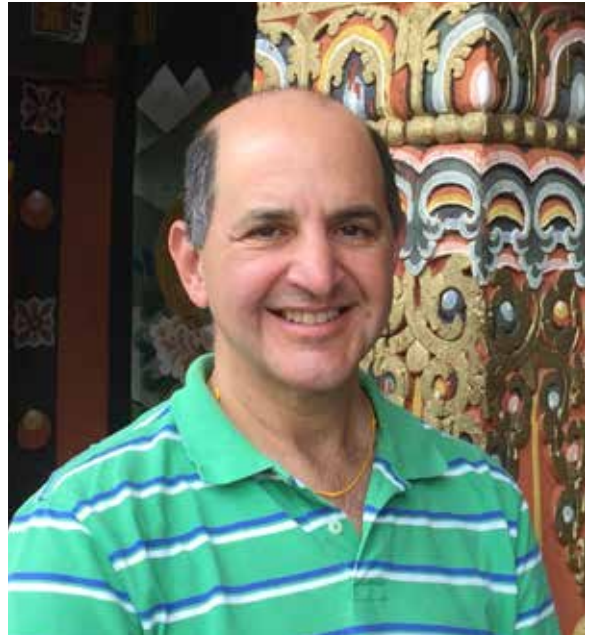
We still need Sanctuary – for our own souls, for others we are yet to know –
because setting aside space for refuge from oppression and empire,
setting aside space for the flourishing of life in its most natural form –
that is setting aside our space, committing our resources, for holy use.

This month we will explore Sanctuary in its deepest forms –
the possibility of providing Sanctuary to immigrants facing deportation, *(see pp. 4-5)*
the refuge this church provides to people's souls every day of the week,
and finding that the line separating those two things,
and separating a hundred other meanings of Sanctuary,
is thin.

From the Board Joe Lobl

As a “newbie” to the Board this year, I have been interested to see how much planning has already gone on to get us ready for the year ahead. The Board has a “To-Do” list that encompasses the entire year, Rev. Luke has arranged an amazing schedule of monthly topics, and the Hospitality and Fellowship teams have packed the church calendar with fun activities and events. I have been a leader in the Chalice Circle program for several years and am excited to see the number of circles growing. I have made some great friendships in Chalice Circles and would strongly encourage you to join one.

One of the skills we work on in Chalice Circles is deep listening, a way of hearing in which we are fully present to what is being said in the moment, without trying to control it, judge it, or reply to it. This type of listening is not passive or static; it is an active process, considering our own thoughts and emotions while focusing attention on what we are hearing.



One of our Board goals for the year is to listen more to our congregants, both adult and youth. With that in mind, we have scheduled our first Listening Session for Saturday morning October 6th from 9 am to noon. We hope to start a discussion about the mission of our congregation, how we have been doing in fulfilling this mission, and how we can plan for future needs. We will review the current shared ministry governance model, as well as the results of last spring's shared ministry evaluation from congregants and committees.

We will also begin a conversation about our building and property and how it may serve us in the future. We would love to hear what you appreciate about the facility and its spaces, what works for you and what doesn't. We hope that you will be able to attend this important session, to share your thoughts and ideas, and to listen as well. To tempt you to come, we will provide a light breakfast!

The monthly theme for October is “Sanctuary.” For me, our church provides not only a space to retreat from the hectic craziness of everyday life, but also a safe space from which I can engage the world with other like-minded people to help bring about social change. Sanctuaries don't just protect us and help us heal from our journeys; they strengthen us for the new journeys ahead. And our sanctuaries also need sheltering and protection themselves.

The UUA Chalice Circle guide for this month perhaps sums it up best with the question, “How are we caring for our sanctuaries so they can take care of us?” We hope to hear from as many congregants as possible on October 6th. If you can't make that meeting, we hope you can attend a session later in the year, or feel free to chat with any board member or Rev. Luke with your thoughts. Looking forward to talking, and listening, with you!

Becoming Advocates for Shelter and Hospitality for Undocumented People



An estimated 2800 undocumented people currently live and work in Olmsted County. They are community members who have families, pay taxes, own property. Yet over the past couple of years, life has changed for them: they are now in danger of being separated from their families and deported to the countries where they were born. Many of them haven't lived in those countries for decades.

Beginning in March 2017 our church members, along with other faith communities, studied current immigration laws, the effect they have on our undocumented neighbors, and the need to speak out for a just immigration system. A year ago, based on the church's mission statement and Unitarian Universalist principles, our congregation voted to declare our intent to advocate for immigration justice and to provide support for undocumented community members who need shelter and hospitality, allowing them time to arrange matters and their lawyer time to sort out legal options.

AND we didn't just vote!

Since that time church committees and individuals have been busy making that intention a reality.

Members of the Racial Justice Task Group

- have worked with the Rochester Sanctuary Coalition, a group of 6 faith institutions in Rochester who have publicly announced that they stand with immigrants facing unjust deportation and that they pledge to offer what protection they can. Peace United Church of Christ and First UU are sanctuary churches—the rest have volunteered to support them.
- have worked with immigrant groups to support just treatment and laws.
- have joined with Isaiah and a number of other faith and community groups to form the Rochester Interfaith Immigrant Rights Coalition, working to establish a legal defense fund and to take on local and national anti-immigrant policies.



Racial Justice Task Group Forum on Immigration Rights and Sanctuary in 2017

Members of the Church Board wrote and approved the Church Sanctuary Policy, which states, in part

First UU recognizes that the persons who seek sanctuary in our church do so under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. It is our hope that the space and time we provide will improve our guests' chances of remaining in our community legally. During their stay with us, we will strive to provide hospitality that includes not only food, shelter, and assistance in gaining access to the legal and other services our guests may need, but also comfortable accommodations, compassion, and company.

Members of the Property Committee have facilitated plans to make physical changes to our building to accommodate a guest. They have designated a room in the church that was

once an RE room and is now a conference room. City codes require replacing the existing window with an egress window and the existing door with a stronger fire door and a lock if someone is going to live there.

Members of the Sanctuary Steering Committee, appointed by the Church Board last January, have created several documents to help us all understand how we can provide hospitality to a Sanctuary guest.

- A flowchart specifies what happens when an undocumented person is referred to our church because they need help. They will first talk to Rev. Luke or another minister, who will consult our pro bono attorney. If the person needs help but not sanctuary, we will help them contact a safe community organization. If the person can benefit from sanctuary, a calling tree will alert volunteers to gather necessary items and help set up a room for our guest.
- A handbook for volunteers explains how we can support the guest while giving them as much privacy and normalcy as possible. It also gives instructions in case of emergencies and what to do if ICE asks to enter the church.
- A thorough list details what we need in order to house a guest quickly. We will ask our church members and those of sanctuary support faith communities to contribute what they can.



Twenty-five people from four faith communities participated in Sanctuary volunteer training in September.

More than 50 church members and friends have volunteered to join with those from other faith communities to provide comfort and hospitality to guests at both Peace UCC and First UU. All volunteers have attended training sessions and completed background checks.

Ways You Can Help



Required renovations will be complete by the end of October.

Become a Sanctuary Volunteer to provide for the needs of a sanctuary guest such as companionship, meals, laundry, shopping, or a presence at the church. Contact Kathy Miner at dannismom1@hotmail.com or give your contact information to church staff who will pass it along.

Sign up for "Act for Justice" with your email address. This is a way in which people can be informed about upcoming state, local, and national issues and let their representatives know how they feel. Sign up in the Commons.

Donate to the Sanctuary Support Fund, established by the Board last March. Money will be used for sanctuary efforts of our church and other faith communities in providing goods, services, and daily necessities. Make checks payable to UU Church and specify Sanctuary Fund on the check.

Donate furniture or goods when the need arises.

Speak out for moral and humane immigration laws and treatment of immigrants.

VOTE.

Service Auction Generates Fun, Fellowship, & Funds

Mark your calendars for the social event of the season: the annual Mike Podulke Service Auction will be held on **Saturday, November 3, 5:30-9 p.m.**

Join us for this fun opportunity to purchase dinners, parties, hikes, and other social engagements for the rest of the year!

The auction itself is always a good time (featuring free appetizers, assorted beverages, and desserts), and it supports TWO good causes—our own church and a charity aligned with our mission that is selected each year by our Social Justice Council. “The church depends on the auction to support about \$21,000 of our operating budget,” explains Linda Thompson, Finance Chair. “For the past few years, we have also raised between \$3,000 and \$6,000 for different local nonprofits.”



2017 Live Auction

This year’s auction will support Family Promise of Rochester, formerly known as Interfaith Hospitality Network. The agency offers temporary shelter and assistance to homeless families with the help of local churches, including ours. Family Promise suffered some losses this year when their Day House flooded. We will have an opportunity to bid on provisions to support Family Promise, as well as items and activities of personal interest.



Kentuck Derby inspired dinner

The auction sparks bodacious creativity, with participants trying to outdo their own offerings from year to year. Bill and Linda Thompson, who have been hosting a Wine Tasting event for years with Jim and Julie Gilkinson, once featured only wines named for celebrities. (Paul Newman Red Blend was the winner at that event.) Cooks in the congregation have come up with theme dinners such as the infamous All-Potato Dinner (hosted by the Katzmans and Mullen-Shultzes, where every course featured potatoes) or meals based on the host’s summer vacation.

There are now three parts to the auction: the **silent auction** (which takes place in the Commons and includes crafts, collectibles, homemade delicacies, and gourmet baskets); the **set-price activities** (which can be found in the Hearth Room); and the **live auction** (which takes place in the Sanctuary with professional auctioneer John Kruesel presiding).

“Mostly, the auction is about fun and fellowship,” says Linda. “We always have a fantastic selection of donations and we have a good time while raising money for our church and a local nonprofit.” You can even come and enjoy the evening without spending a dime. Or buy a \$15 raffle ticket and, if you are lucky, perhaps go home with a weekend at the MacLaughlin’s lakeshore cabin, a perennial favorite!



2017 Silent Auction

Look for donation forms in the lobby and more information in each Thursday’s eNews during the month of October.

Upcoming Events

Watch the Weekly eNews for a complete list of events



5:30-6:30 pm Dinner in the Commons (*free will donation*)
 6:00-7:15 pm Choir Rehearsal
 6:30-7:15 pm Forum, Homework Help, Children's Activities, Childcare in Nursery
 6:30-7:15 pm Walden Hill Youth Group
 *Note: there will be no dinner or programs on October 30th, due to Halloween

Saturday, October 6 9 am-12 pm	Envisioning our Future A gathering for leaders and others to consider the vision and goals of the church for the coming year.
Sunday, October 28 9 & 11 am	All Soul's Sunday Services Annual All Soul's service, including lighting candles of memory and celebrating the presence of ancestors. All are welcome to bring a memento or picture of loved ones for our altar of all souls.
Sunday, October 28 12:30 pm	Trunk or Treat (<i>For the Whole Congregation</i>) We invite children to wear their non-scary Halloween costumes to Church, then everyone is invited to a safe and fun "Trick or Treat" experience.
Saturday, November 3 5:30-9:00 pm	Annual Service Auction Party A night of food, music, and fun to support the work of the church. The silent auction includes special events, dinners, and groups, and the live auction includes various services, retreats, cabins, and more!
Friday - Saturday December 7 & 8	Handcrafted Bazaar Fundraiser The Bazaar featuring over 35 local artisans showing their unique, recycled and handcrafted wares!

Church Staff

Luke Stevens-Royer	Minister	revluke@uurochmn.org
Joyce Rood	Director of Religious Education	dre@uurochmn.org
Melissa Egglar	Coordinator of Congregational Life	congregationlife@uurochmn.org
Jody Tharp	Congregational Co-Administrator	office@uurochmn.org
Connie Schuelka	Congr. Co-Administrator / Co-Dir. of Music	administration@uurochmn.org
Joe Mish	Co-Director of Music	music@uurochmn.org
Derik Robertson	Youth Program Coordinator	youthprogram@uurochmn.org
Chantelle Feddersen	Childcare Coordinator	childcare@uurochmn.org
Tom Rud	Custodian	custodian@uurochmn.org

Throwback Page

History Highlights of First UU



Pictured: Sanctuary of First Universalist Church of Rochester, MN, dedicated in 1916

"The new home of the Universalists of Rochester was planned with a view of respecting beauty of the old Grace Church...every brick in its walls was loved by those who had, Sunday in and Sunday out, worshipped within its portals. This church builded (sic) of living stones as a testimony of faith. The sermon of dedication by the national leader of the Universalist church used the words from Genesis in the Hebrew Bible: "this is none other than the gate to heaven."

- *Rochester Daily Bulletin*, June 1916, following the dedication of the newly built First Universalist Church, our congregation's third building. (Our current building is the fourth.)

First Unitarian Universalist Church



1727 Walden Lane SW
Rochester, Minnesota 55902
507-282-5209 | uurochmn.org

Sunday Services & Religious Education
9 & 11 a.m.

Our publication title, **Grace Notes**, harkens back to the name of this congregation in the 1870s, Grace Church, and also refers to a grace note in music, which is an extra flourish to a main piece of music. Each month, we create some space to highlight just a flourish, some extra notes, within the larger life of our church.