

Published by and for the Unitarian Universalist Community of Rock Valley
329 School St., Mailing address: P.O. Box 256, Rockton, IL 61072
Phone: 815-624-4094 Visit us at www.uucrv.org



MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

You are invited to participate in a multi-platform meeting on Sunday, December 10 from 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. to share your vision for the future of our congregation. We want to hear your vision for the post-pandemic future of our congregation.

Everyone will be given the opportunity to share your vision for the congregation and the building. This is a listening session, and no decisions will be made. Rev. Dr. Marlene Walker will facilitate the listening session.

I'm always amazed at how much our small congregation does. In her essay "A Tiny Church is Like a Seed", Rev. Darcey Elizabeth Hegvik says, "I've noticed that tiny churches (fewer than 30 members) who thrive are good at NOT doing things, are good at letting things go... You don't have to keep all the plates spinning, like that old vaudeville act. Tiny churches learn how to put plates down, and spin the one that's most important right now."

Our congregation is good at setting priorities, and saying NO to things that distract from our mission. As we emerged from the pandemic our priority was to make the church building safe for use by our members and the community. Like any older building there are many things that should be and could be done. We got a grant and raised the remaining money to replace the exhaust fans on the roof to enhance ventilation in the building. We fixed the leaky roof with money from our building fund. We upgraded our multi-platform video capability. We cleaned away the dust and dirt that accumulated during the two years that we were closed, and opened the doors to let people back in.

But, there is still a lot to do to make the church building fully functional especially to other groups. The question that was put to the board was is it worth the cost to continue to put time and money into repairs, painting and making safety improvements to the building when we could be using the money for social justice projects and community ministry.

The Board appointed a special task force to address this question. We are now asking for your views on our mission and the future use of the church building. Please plan to participate in the conversation after the service on December 10th.

Jerry Paulson

MARLENE'S MINISTERIAL MUSINGS

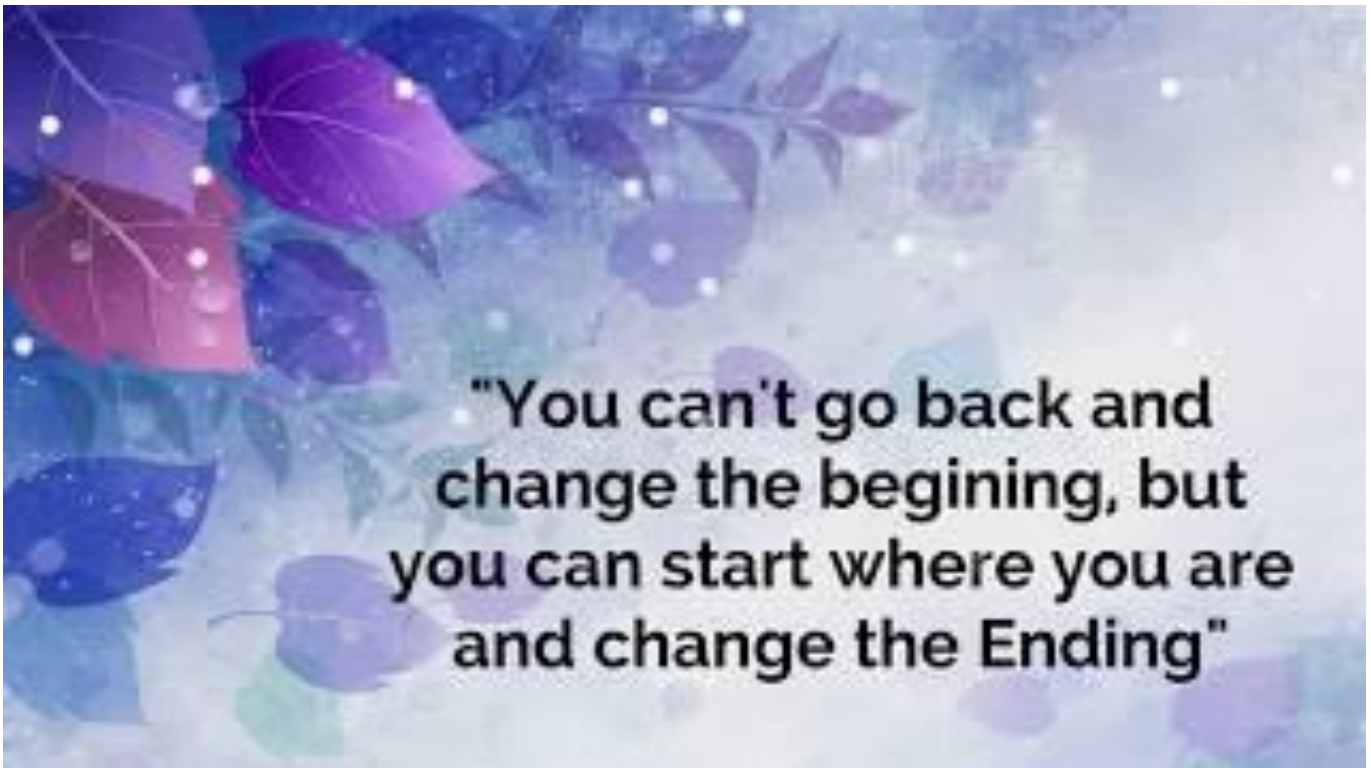
Now that Thanksgiving has come and gone, the turkey, stuffing, and pies mostly eaten (for now) and we are barreling into the seasons of Hannukah, Solstice, and Christmas, as well as the oncoming new year, I find myself praying. A lot. Top on my list is for some kind of peace in the middle east, the return of all the hostages safely, the ending of horrors on both sides. I know this prayer is a big ask. It is such a complex situation and I have deep personal connections to it that I often find it hard to talk about. So, prayer it is. For now.



I also find myself praying for all those increasingly impacted by Antisemitism and Islamophobia here in the US. I pray for the state of our democracy here in the US, I pray really hard for this one. I pray for all kinds of other things, for all of you, all the time, I pray for a mild winter, and a short one too, and I pray that we all know that we are worthy and held in the embrace of a love that knows no bounds. I'm sure there are more prayers that pop up from time to time but these are the ones most on my heart in this holy of seasons. What prayers are you holding in your hearts?

Blessings,

Rev. Marlene



The darkness of Winter Solstice draws us inward to reflect as the year comes to an end. This quote by C.S. Lewis invites some reflection as the wheel of the year turns from 2023 to 2024.

DECEMBER WORSHIP SERVICES

DECEMBER 3 "CELEBRATING THE LIGHT" REV. PAMELA RUMANCIK

As we enter the darkest time of the year, let's take a moment to appreciate the ways our ancestors have held onto hope even in the midst of deep challenge and sorrow. We begin the celebration of Hanukkah this week even as Christians observe Advent. We honor those who have inspired us with their perseverance, courage, and compassion by lighting candles and holding onto hope for a better tomorrow.

The Rev Pamela Rumancik is poet, native plant enthusiast and long-time tree-hugger. Her spiritual roots reach back to Catholicism, and she is an initiate into the Ruhaniat Sufi tradition. These liturgical origins inform her love of the arts as a vehicle for experiencing the holy otherness of life. Pam's deepest commitments are to remembering the divine in each being and finding ways to open conversation with folks who see the world differently. Originally from Lorain, Ohio, she is the mother of three grown children and the wife of Rev Karen Mooney. Pam and Karen live in Bull Valley, Il, share their home with two goldendoodles and spend a lot of time working in their garden.

DECEMBER 10 "CURIOSITY DID NOT KILL THE CAT" REV. DR. MARLENE WALKER

This sermon is part of a series of what I often call the three C's. Three C words that I have come to see as critical for creating not only healthy congregational life but also for developing ourselves and living life in ways that lead to more creativity and happiness. The three C's are today's C - Curiosity, as well as Capacity and Communication.

Following the service we will engage in a Congregational Conversation – see info elsewhere in the newsletter.

DECEMBER 17 "MUSIC OF THE SEASON"

Songs to sing-along and music by UUCRV Singers and musicians.

DECEMBER 24 "LESSONS AND CAROLS" REV. DR. MARLENE WALKER

On this Christmas Eve day we will celebrate a mostly traditional Christmas Lessons and Carols. There will be lots of singing, telling of old stories as well as some new ones, and of course candle lighting.

DECEMBER 31 "OUT WITH THE OLD YEAR, IN WITH THE NEW" LAY LEADERS: NINA HERZER & DONNA BEAUMONT

UUCRV ACTIVITIES

THE TOUCHSTONES JOURNAL

NOTE: DUE TO THE HOLIDAYS, THE TOUCHSTONES GROUP WILL MEET ON DECEMBER 13 INSTEAD OF THE 20TH.

The Touchstones Discussion Group has reached maximum capacity. The journal is still available to all members for individual reading and reflection. This month's topic is: Pluralism https://www.touchstonesproject.com/files/ugd/552cc1_09e1e97cfb0149a0921f2c140f057154.pdf

If you would like to be on a waiting list for the Touchstones discussion group, contact Connie Matusiak @ 608-361-9669. They meet in person on the third Wednesday of the month.

UUCRV'S GENTLY USED HOLIDAY DÉCOR & PHENOMENAL BAKE SALE

SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 9 A.M. TO 3 P.M.

Spread the word or drop by yourself. Our popular combined sales returns. 'Tis the season to participate in the Rockton Christmas Walk. We will be selling "gently used" Christmas items and world acclaimed baked goods made with love by UUCRV members. People come from far & wide for them.



We welcome all who would like to be *Santa's Helpers* to take down, work a shift during the sale, and make and sell items for the bake sale.

To volunteer or for more information contact:

Paulette Lucas plflamingo13@yahoo.com, Wendy Edgington sing2all@live.com /708-337-9640

Dianna Kevari (bake sale only) at 608-365-2343.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST COMMUNITY OF ROCK VALLEY

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2022-2023 OFFICERS

President	Jerry Paulson	815-222-4414
Vice-President	Cher Zimmerman	608-365-2343
Secretary	Jodell Gabriel	815-742-0704
Treasurer	Paulette Lucas	815-601-3225
At Large	Carol Klager	815-298-0477

Members are welcome at all UUCRV committee meetings.

Check the calendar in this newsletter for meeting times.

If you have questions or comments to share, contact board members or the appropriate committee chair.

Rev. Dr. Marlene Walker

Email: revmwalker@mac.com

Phone: 970-640-5444

Rainbow Recovery

Open to LGBTQ+ folk in any 12 step program

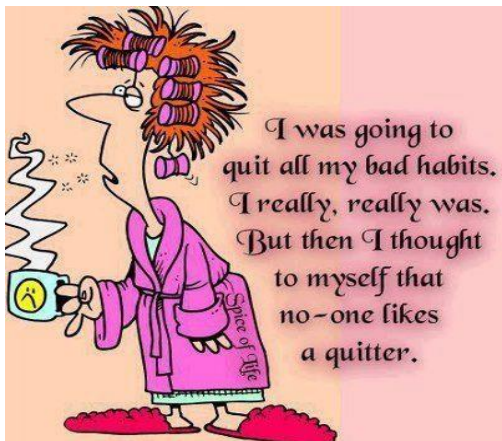
3rd Friday of the month

6:30pm - 7:30pm

Unitarian Universalist Church
329 School St, Rockton, IL 61072

Join us for a 12 step focused meeting & fellowship

Preparations for 2024



COMMITTEES & CHAIRS (OR CO-CHAIRS)

Finance: Cher Zimmerman

Faith Formations: Susan Busker

Membership: Diana Kevari

Building & Grounds: Denny Broderick & Brock Heckel

Technology Advancements: Denny Broderick


Music: Wendy Edgington, Denny Broderick & Amy Phelps

TASK GROUPS

Spruce up: Paulette Lucas

Newsletter: Editor Jodell Gabriel; Calendar Susan Busker

DECEMBER 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 9 a.m -3 p.m. Holiday Décor & Bake Sale
3 *** 10:30 am Worship: Celebrating the Light Guest Minister: Rev. Pam Rumancik Lay Leader: Nina Herzer	4	5 <i>Kathy Dierstein's birthday</i>	6 1-2 pm Finance Committee Zoom meeting	7 1-2 pm Building Task Force meeting Hannukah begins	8	9
10 *** 10:30 am Worship: Curiosity Did Not Kill the Cat Rev. Dr. Marlene Walker 11:45-1:15 Congregational Conversation	11 10-12 Faith Formation Committee Zoom Meeting	12 3 p.m. Membership Committee	13 10:30 am Touchstones Small Group Discussion	14 2-4 pm Board Zoom Meeting <i>David Shair's birthday</i>	15	16
17 *** 10:30 am Worship: Music Service Musicians: Amy Phelps and Denny Broderick Worship Associate: Nina Herzer	18 <i>Lee Johnson's birthday</i>	19	20 <i>January Newsletter DEADLINE</i> <i>Please send in dates & articles</i>	21 Winter Solstice	22	23
24 *** 10:30 am Worship: Lessons and Carols Rev. Dr. Marlene Walker	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29	30
31 *** 10:30 am Worship: "Out With the Old Year, In With the New" Lay Leaders: Nina Herzer & Donna Beaumont						

*****WORSHIP SERVICES ARE MULTIPLATFORM INCLUDING ON ZOOM**

(THE ZOOM LINK IS IN THE "SERVICE INFORMATION" EMAIL SENT TO MEMBERS & FRIENDS PRIOR TO THE SERVICE. REQUEST SERVICE INFORMATION BY EMAILING: UJCROCKVALLEY@GMAIL.COM)