



# The First Spiritualist Temple of East Aurora

*A Member of the National Spiritualist Association of Churches, U.S.A.*

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## Newsletter May 23, 2021: First Spiritualist Temple of East Aurora

### By the numbers

- In **April 2020**, we held three livestream services on Facebook. Offering was \$805.00.
- In **April 2021**, we held 4 regular Sunday services, with an average of 32 people attending each service. Offering was \$798.
- On April 14, 2021, we held a mid-week all-message service; 27 people attending. Offering was \$207.

### Upcoming speakers each Sunday, and special events after worship service

- May 23, Cara Seekings
- May 30, Jeanne Laurel
- June 06, Ron Skowronski (annual member meeting)
- June 13, Barbara Kellerman (board meeting—may be abbreviated or cancelled)
- June 20, Robert Lowell Goller
- June 27, Bonnie Woods (meeting, Pastoral Committee & congregation)
- July 04, Darlene Feskun
- July 11, Lynette Lex (board meeting)
- July 18, Diana Moore
- July 25, Cyndi Pirog

### Annual Member Meeting

- We're holding the annual member meeting June 06, the first Sunday in June this year. (We usually hold the annual meeting first Sunday in May—we delayed for pandemic safety.) Please pay your dues in advance in order to be able to vote at the meeting: \$30 for ages 18-64, \$25 for those 65+.
- Agenda includes election of officers & pastoral committee:
  - President (incumbent Jeanne Laurel)
  - Secretary (incumbent Sandra Lombardo)
  - Financial Secretary (incumbent Donna Bush)
  - Trustee/odd year (incumbents Lynette Lex, Tom Schickling)
  - Pastoral committee: Currently, Bev Burke, Cheryl Ziccard, Beth Heaney; Diana Moore has applied
- Other agenda items (highlights):
  - Andrew Bozeman's proposal for upstairs foyer (or vestibule) decorations
  - Bylaws amendment, adding as standing committee Social Media/Information Technology. It has been an ad hoc (as needed) committee for several years.
- Reminder to committee chairs: please bring your written report for the year's activities to the meeting.
- The Ways & Means Committee will be holding a raffle of Christmas baskets Saturday & Sunday, June 05 and 06; see details below under "Events."



- You may attend downstairs in the lunch area, or by Zoom. The meeting will start as quickly as feasible after the worship service—which means around 12:45 or 1 p.m. We’ll try to proceed at a brisk pace and still make sure everyone is heard, but be aware the meeting will run several hours. It would be prudent to bring your own refreshments if you plan to attend in person.
  - Zoom direct link <https://zoom.us/j/91422751462>
  - Or, launch Zoom and enter Meeting ID: 914 2275 1462
  - Or (audio only) dial 929-205-6099, and enter Meeting ID at the prompt

### **Pandemic Progress**

Rates of Covid19 infection and hospitalization are falling; vaccination rates are climbing. CDC guidance and New York state regulations are changing. We’re taking it slow, because we want First Spiritualist Temple to remain welcoming to everyone, including those who have not yet had vaccinations. We do not want to require a “vaccine passport” for people walking through our doors—although we acknowledge that each of us is responsible for our own well-being.

- We’re still wearing masks (including people who are fully vaccinated), and humming rather than singing hymns.
- You’ll start seeing some other things getting back to normal: some of the tape will be coming off pews (but please maintain social distancing), and some paper items returning (affidavits, newsletters, flyers).

### **Events**

- **June 05 and 06:** Christmas in May, June, July... and more! Our annual Christmas Bazaar had to be cancelled in December for pandemic safety—but our generous members and friends have contributed a stockpile of goodies. The Ways & Means Committee is raffling off one basket each Sunday. In addition, they have planned a special raffle in connection with our annual member meeting.

On Saturday, June 05 (from 9:30 a.m. until 5 p.m.), and again on Sunday, June 06 (the day of the member meeting, before and after worship service), the Raffle Committee will have tables set up in our memorial garden. Visitors may purchase tickets, and use these tickets to bid on baskets on display. (If you’re not sure how this works—just ask! It’s simpler than it sounds.) Baskets will be drawn after the Annual Meeting winners to be notified by phone. You don’t need to stay for the drawing.

Ways & Means committee chair has called for workers to volunteer carrying baskets in and out, monitoring traffic, and selling tickets. If you are interested in playing Santa Claus, please let Lyn know; you can reach her at church, or by calling her at 585-322-3213 (cell) or 585-250-4767 (home), or emailing at [battlyn2@gmail.com](mailto:battlyn2@gmail.com).

- **Mid-June:** Our mid-April All-Message Service was a great success. We’re looking at another such service in mid-June. The tentative date is Wednesday, June 23, 2021 at 7 p.m. at the church. (We’re still lining up mediums, so the date is not absolutely set yet.)
- **June 27:** The next Pastoral Committee Meeting with Congregation will be held after Sunday service on June 27 at about 12:30 p.m. This is your chance to discuss what’s working well, and what could use some attention or change.
- **July 18:** The board has voted to hold our Summer Picnic. Plans are still underway to find a location in a nearby park. We’re shooting for the third Sunday in July, the 18<sup>th</sup>, but that may change.
- **Labor Day:** Lyn Batt, Quilter Extraordinaire, has produced a masterpiece of a quilt in a yellow-and-green, sunflowers-and-fairies design. It’s downstairs if you’d like to take a look. The Ways & Means Committee will be selling raffle tickets at \$5 apiece for this quilt starting now, with drawing to be held around Labor Day, September 06. Church members are asked to sell 10 tickets apiece to friends, neighbors and relatives.

## Garden

Our memorial garden is starting to shape up after a long, hard winter, thanks to Darlene and her volunteer crew. Thank you to everyone who turned out on Saturday, May 15—including some of our local neighbors! The garden still needs work, but little by little, weeds, dead leaves and flotsam will disappear. If you see a weed or a bit of stuff that doesn't belong, help us by disposing of it.

Church members and friends are still invited to plant tributes to loved ones in spirit, or place stepping stones or other garden-items. We're not offering plots for planting on a "forever" basis, because the garden is small, and plants may overgrow their bounds or become scraggly. But you can brighten our little sanctuary with a special plant or two.

Again, a huge thanks to those who participated in the clean up. The church will be purchasing some topsoil and mulch. If you want to claim a spot to plant, feel free to use the soil and mulch supplies for your plantings, whether you're digging solo or with a clean-up crew. The next garden clean-up(s) will be Tuesday, May 25 (and/or Tuesday, June 01)—another chance to play in the dirt! These are weekdays, so expect activity in the early evening; check with Darlene if you need to know a specific time she'll be there.

## FST Needs You!

- **Reception.** This month's call for volunteers focuses on Reception Committee. The pandemic limited our foot-traffic, but we're starting to see new faces on Sundays. We'd like to put our best foot forward, and greet old and new visitors at the front door between 10 and 11 a.m. Some have questions about our religion; others just want to know how long service runs and where to sit. If you would like to pitch in, please join us in the upstairs lobby.
- **Hydesville Memorial Park: in Honor of Gladys Kellerman.** As reported in the April 2021 NSAC newsletter, Alice L. Robertson from the Spiritualist Desert Church in Las Vegas, NV, has offered a donation match up to \$18,480 received by the end of 2021 to establish the Hydesville Memorial Park Endowment Fund for maintaining the Fox Cottage. The cottage was where the Fox sisters first heard rappings on March 31, 1848, which we mark as the beginning of Modern Spiritualism. Monies will be invested, with 4.5% of the revenue annually used for repairs and upkeep on the property. The principal beyond this 4.5% will continue to earn interest to support this important conservation effort for years to come.

The FST board has voted to donate \$250 to this endowment fund from general funds. Two church members have also volunteered generous donations. All donations from our church will be noted as being in honor of Gladys Kellerman, a long-time anchor of our church, who passed in March 2020. We are also looking into getting a "paver" (a stepping stone on park grounds) engraved with Gladys's name.

We will have a special container placed by the offerings collection point on Sundays for those who wish to contribute to this fund. Cash is welcome; if you wish to contribute a check, please make it payable to the church. We'll account for all money collected, and cut one whopping check at the end of June.

## Zoom and Classes

- **Zoom.** Starting after the June 06 annual member meeting, we will use the same Zoom numbers for meetings, with one number for each day of the week. In addition, anyone may use the church Zoom account for a meeting or class—just let me know if you need help setting up to host a meeting.
  - Mondays, link <https://zoom.us/j/98908343264>, ID 989 0834 3264
  - Tuesdays, link <https://zoom.us/j/93782889733>, ID 937 8288 9733
  - Wednesdays, link <https://zoom.us/j/99498052420>, ID 994 9805 2420
  - Thursdays, link <https://zoom.us/j/93033218920>, ID 930 3321 8920
  - Fridays, link <https://zoom.us/j/94842337658>, ID 948 4233 7658
  - Saturdays, link <https://zoom.us/j/97800261770>, ID 978 0026 1770
  - Sundays, link <https://zoom.us/j/98423834708>, ID 984 2383 4708

If your meeting is on a Monday, use the Monday link or number. Click the link; or open Zoom and enter ID number. For any meeting, audio only, dial 929 205 6099 and enter meeting ID.

- **Classes.** We have a full roster of classes upcoming—some with start dates, and some still in planning stages.
  - Thought Exchange continues on the first and third Monday of each month (with one cancellation on July 19). Led by Jeanne Laurel. It meets 7 p.m. by Zoom only for open discussion on any topic. The group chooses the topics; on Monday, June 07, we'll be discussing the natural law "Honesty is the best policy."
  - Development (or unfoldment). Robert Lowell Goller will begin this class to run on Wednesdays, starting September 08, in the church. He will cover pre-development (concepts and warm-up skills) for the first several weeks. You can also take one or more of the pre-development modules we are offering.

The first pre-development module will be Terminology, vocabulary used to describe mediumship. This one-evening class, led by Jeanne Laurel, will meet by Zoom on Tuesday, June 08 at 7 p.m. Please contact me in advance to get the handout of terms and thumbnail definitions.

This summer, we'll have several more pre-development modules, dates TBA: Thomas Schickling will present The Nine Principles of Spiritualism; Andrew Bozeman will offer some sessions on meditation. You do not have to be planning to take the development class with Rob in order to attend the pre-development modules.
  - Homiletics, or how to write and present a Spiritualist sermon. Led by Jeanne Laurel. The class will meet on most Tuesdays from June 15 through the end of August, with some in-church sessions before or after Sunday services. We'll write and critique each other's practice sermons.
  - Additional classes upcoming include The Philosophy of Spiritualism led by Darlene Feskun; and Angels led by Andrew Bozeman. When we have a handful of people interested, we'll also arrange for another offering of "Spiritualism 101," introduction to NSAC Spiritualism, what we teach, what we don't, and why.
  - Morris Pratt Institute (MPI) study and support group meets on the last Sunday of each month after the worship service, facilitated by Beverly Burke and Lynette Lex (both recent graduates of MPI).

### **Congratulations!**

Lynette Lex has completed her MPI (Morris Pratt Institute) studies as of April 2021. Now, Lynette is applying to NSAC for her credentials as a Certified Medium, which involves testing and presentation of affidavits. Thanks to the generous and thoughtful contributions from members and friends over the past few years, Lynette is well supplied with affidavits of her abilities to present evidential messages from spirit.

As always, thank you to members and friends; you make this church possible. Indeed, you make it spectacular, even in a year where there were so many challenges. I look forward to seeing you all at the Sunday, June 06 annual meeting. With love, light and laughter – Jeanne Phoenix Laurel, President, First Spiritualist Temple. (Cell 716-208-0624; home 716-876-4805; email [jeannelaurel@gmail.com](mailto:jeannelaurel@gmail.com) or [president@firstspiritualisttemple.com](mailto:president@firstspiritualisttemple.com).)