

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo

APRIL 2020 NEWSLETTER

Gather ~ Inspire ~ Transform

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Minister's Column: What does it mean to be People of Liberation?



What a great question as we perch on what seems to be the beginning of a long pandemic siege. How can we continue to dismantle systems of oppression, while we search for our own liberation when we are quarantined?

Injustice will not wait for us while we stock up on toilet paper. Power abuses will not relax while we maintain our distance. Economic inequity and climate destruction will not take a vacation while we hunker down in the safety of our homes.

This is the season of spring, Passover and Easter. All celebrations of liberation – new life emerging from winter's grip, enslaved people seizing their freedom, the sacred surviving death.

This is not a time for sleep. It is a time for letter writing, emails, generosity and advocacy. An election is coming. The usual foodbanks and shelters are crowded. Many of those who were living paycheck to paycheck before covid-19 now have no paycheck at all. Our neighbors are more vulnerable than ever poverty, discrimination, and illness.

If you are wondering how you can help, all you need to do is read the newspaper to find something to do. Call a friend, have a conversation, decide on an issue that is bothering you, and think up what organization needs your help to address the issue.

The Justice Ministry Team at the church decided that this month, while we explore the concept of Liberation, we would dedicate our Share the Plate ministry to the Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement, CAIC,

<https://www.facebook.com/NYCAIC/> .

That was before the pandemic. We are still devoting our Share the Plate ministry to CAIC, but for those of us who have never been incarcerated, this social justice action provides a new sense of compassion.



You can make a difference in this world. This is a time to grow. This is a time to push out and up out of the earth clod. It is time to bud and blossom, bringing new vibrancy to your heart and to our community. That's what it means to be People of Liberation. ***Yours in faith and affection, Joan***

Sunday Morning Worship

As you may be aware, because we care for your health and the health of all your loved ones, the Unitarian Universalist Church has closed its doors to any physical meetings until the threat of covid-19 is under control. But we will not let a pandemic crush our community. We will still gather and "do church" through Zoom. For the last several weeks we have gone virtual and it has been both a wonderful learning curve and a fabulous success.

In preparation for worship, we want to send the login information and tips for those who have not used Zoom before. It is a simple process, but we want to address any difficulties you may have.

First, if possible, download the Zoom app on your computer, phone, or tablet before Sunday morning. This is a free app. If you haven't downloaded it yet, just download it from your app store and follow the set-up instructions. If you have Gmail or Facebook set up is extremely fast and as easy as a click. If you do not have Gmail or Facebook no worries, it is still a very simple 2-3-minute process.

Things to know:

- Unlike a Zoom meeting, worship will be a Zoom webinar. You will be able to see all those who you normally would see on the chancel, but you won't be able to see or hear anyone else, and they won't see or hear you. This has an upside. You can tune into church with your coffee and in your PJs.
- During the service and during a short online fellowship hour, you can make a comment, say hello, and connect with the whole congregation in the chat box

On Sunday morning just paste <https://uuma.zoom.us/j/367428065> into your (computer, phone or tablet) browser, follow the prompts and you will be in the service.

If you are just using the audio on your phone dial +1 646 876 9923, and when they ask for the meeting ID, dial this number 367 428 065 and you will hear the service, but you won't see it.

Pulpit Previews

April 5: To Free the Prisoners, Rev. Joan Montagnes

Spring and the celebration of Passover lend new meaning to these days of confinement. A season of growth and a story of self-determination provide lessons while we sit in quarantine.

April 12: The Promise of Change, Rev. Joan Montagnes

If Easter teaches us one thing, it is that change is possible. Life can conquer even death. Winter can become the miracle of spring. And we can rise, liberated from the bonds that hold us today, into a new tomorrow.

April 19: A Musical Sunday, Daniel Bassin

The church remains closed for all gatherings. That means no choir practice, no guest musicians and no music Sunday. Nevertheless, we will not let a virus dampen our spirits. We may not have Music Sunday this spring, but we will have a Musical Sunday!

April 26: Always Free, Rev. Joan Montagnes

A reflective service, contemplating the meaning of liberation in our lives.

Joys and Sorrows

We send healing thoughts to Greg Photiadis who has been diagnosed with mild symptoms of covid-19. His wife, Sandy Chelnov, has tested negative.

Our hearts are with Kevin Coady and his family. Kevin's brother, Shawn, passed away on February 26.

Brown Bag Lunch with the Minister

Every day at 12pm, Rev. Joan hosts a lunchtime get together on Zoom. Bring a sandwich and a cup of coffee. Visit with old buddies and make new friends. See each other's smiling faces, share your worries, tell your stories, gain insights, and have some laughs. Everyone is very welcome.

To attend, paste <https://uuma.zoom.us/j/138000249> into your browser, follow the prompts and you'll be at lunch. Or if your computer doesn't have a camera or mic, you can just dial in on your phone, +1 646 876 9923, the meeting ID is 138 000 249

It will be great to be with you!

Religious Education & Adult Faith Development News



Sarah Martin, Director of Religious Education

Please check the website or email lifespan@buffalouu.org for updates to our Adult Faith Development Program!

Please check the UUCB Religious Education Facebook page or email lifespan@buffalouu.org for updates to our Religious Education program for children and youth.

What a stressful, heavy, rollercoaster of a month it has been, beloveds. Last month at this time, though the threat of covid-19 seemed to loom in the distance, we were planning the rest of our religious education year with the intent of carrying it out in person. And now we don't know when we will be back in the church building. This has, however, not stopped us from gathering online to create and strengthen community bonds, celebrate our shared values, and make beautiful music together!

Our religious education program has been meeting over Zoom for weeknight "Chalice Check Ins", and we've used Zoom and Google Hangouts for some of our classes to continue meeting. Some of us have been putting together a Spring Play video project that we will share with the congregation from our new YouTube channel. Our Chalice Check Ins have themes like arts & crafts, Lego building, show & tell, sing alongs, and pajama story time.

In the next few weeks, look for information on parent support groups and family worship!

We are still figuring out how best to meet everyone's spiritual and emotional needs during this challenging time and you can expect our program to keep adapting and changing as we get better at this.

In the meantime, we hope you will try to connect with us online. It has been so good to see each other's faces in the evenings.

I will leave you with this lovely story written to help children understand what social distancing is, why we're doing it, and how we can make the most of our time at home: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DA_SsZFYw0w

Beyond the Hedge: Denomination and Interfaith Connections

Sharon Walker, uucb.wny.specevents@gmail.com



Please contact <https://www.uua.org/ga> for the latest status.

UAIM – Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry News

UAIM has taken the lead in dreaming up a list of accessible and inclusion wishes for the 2020 Capital Campaign. If you have any accessible or inclusion dreams for our church talk to Lynn Mancuso, Tony Keller, Sophia Roberts, Sue Mann-Dolce, Ginny Vaughan, Steve Wixson, Tim Ashton or e-mail Ginny @ wixonsg@gmail.com.

When we return to church, UAIM has placed two padded black chairs in the Sanctuary behind the pews facing the Parish Hall door. The chairs are open to everyone, but especially for people who need a more comfortable seat or have difficulty rising from a pew seat.

This month UAIM is recommending a book by Judith Heumann, [Being Heumann: An Unrepentance Memoir of a Disability Badass](#). Ms. Heumann had Polio when she was 18 months old. She is a Disability Rights Leader and a Civil Rights Advocate. In 2010, President Obama appointed her special advisor on Disability Rights in the State Department. She left the post in 2017.

Share-the-Plate

As Rev. Joan mentioned in her column, the Justice Ministry at the church has decided to dedicate the April Share-the-Plate to the Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement (CAIC). Since 2012, CAIC has been committed to ending the torture of solitary confinement in NY state. Motivated by the reality that this issue harms not only the thousands of people held in solitary currently, but families, communities, and society, the Western NY chapter of CAIC engages in public education, advocacy, and activism with the goal of criminal justice reform. Its proposed bill HALT (Humane Alternatives to Long-Term) Solitary Confinement is at a crucial point, with a majority of supporters in both the assembly and senate. To learn more and get involved, email info@wnycaic.org.



We gather in loving community, inspiring one another, to transform ourselves, to create a more just and compassionate world

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A chalice alit since 1831
A sanctuary on the National Registry of Historic Places

