



Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo

JUNE NEWSLETTER

Gather - Inspire - Transform



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

It's June! And that means Pride Celebrations! Pride is about being your



authentic self and loving who you love. Its about lifting up the rainbow of human sexuality, gender and affection as the sacred, precious and delightful gifts they are. It is about Love overcoming fear. Always.

June also means Juneteenth. Juneteenth celebrates the earliest known observance of the ending of slavery in the United States. On June 19, 1865, Major General Gordon Granger of the Union Army rode into Galveston, Texas in final execution of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. As they did in the past, today's festivities raise up heritage, powerful voices, and the possibility of this nation truly becoming a land of the free.



Both Buffalo Pride and Buffalo Juneteenth are going to be virtual this year for safety's sake, but the celebrations are still on. Check out the following websites: <https://buffaloprideweek.com/pride-2021-update/> and <https://www.juneteenthofbuffalo.com/> .

June also brings us the Flower Communion Ceremony. We will still be worshiping online this month, but that won't get in the way of this important living tradition. Come to the church Garden Entrance between 12:30pm and 2:30pm on Sunday, June 20 and receive a beautiful living plant for your garden. A symbol of vibrant church life for your home. At the same time, you can bring in donations for the Evergreen Health Food Pantry. The wish list includes, toiletries (such as : feminine hygiene products, soap, toothpaste, tooth brushes, body wash, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, disposable razors, etc.) and non-perishable groceries. **Please note that items should be new and unopened.** Or you can bring a financial contribution for the Pride Center of WNY, payable to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo. Looking forward to seeing you!

The arrival of June also means that summer will be here soon and we can head outside to play! Go for a walk, a picnic, a bike ride, invite a friend. Laugh. Build community. As covid rates diminish in Erie County, slowly and carefully emerge from your cocoon and discover the beauty of all your relationships. If the pandemic has taught us anything, its that we are connected in a network of mutuality. We don't just need each other; we belong to each other.

Perhaps even more important than the actual celebrations of Pride, Juneteenth and the Flower Communion, are the values of authenticity, love, liberation, pride, and joy that we can live every day of the year. Break gently free of your wintry solitude. Reach out to the new day and play. You can't live your values in isolation. And the good news is, you are not alone.

Yours in faith and affection, *Rev. Joan Montagnes*

June Pulpit Previews, Zoom Webinar Worship

(click <https://www.buffalouu.org/zoom-info.html> for Zoom Webinar instructions).



June 6: Divine Play, Rev. Joan Montagnes

In Hinduism *lila*, or divine play, is both the process of creation and the manifestation of the true nature of God. Imagine that, all that is sacred in the universe is the Holy having a whole lot of fun!

June 13: Play as Spiritual Practice and a Way Through, Rev. Tandi Rogers

Creator, creation, creativity. I think of the creative process as worship and prayer, as my time out of time flowing with the divine, the Ultimate Creator. And these are the times for it. In a pandemic we don't have access to our full cerebral cortex, that meaning-making part of our brain. We go down to limbic and reptilian as a way to keep ourselves alive. Emotions, sensory processing, instincts, memory... those are all limbic. Play was made for these times!

Rev. Tandi Rogers is multi-vocational: teaching at both Meadville Lombard Theological School and Seattle University's School of Theology & Ministry, spiritual director in private practice, and having served the Unitarian Universalist Association for almost 20 years, is a learning strategist and coordinator of a new initiative helping congregation practice covenant and engage in faithful conflict. She lives in Tacoma, WA with her wife Rev. Sue Phillips.

June 20: A Living Communion, Rev. Joan Montagnes

It's Flower Communion Sunday! Celebrate together the glory of a living community that changes and grows like a field of wildflowers. Our whole is so much more than the sum of our parts.

June 27: Bending the Arc of Justice, Bobby Withrow

MLK said that the "moral arc of the universe bends toward justice." These words breed two things. First: hope, for a more just future for all. Second: complacency, as they seem to show that justice is an inevitability. Ours is not a religion of complacency, so let us help bend the arc.

Flower Communion: Sunday, June 20

We will still be worshipping online this month, but that won't get in the way of this important living tradition. Come to the church Garden Entrance between 12:30pm and 2:30pm on Sunday, June 20 and receive a beautiful living plant for your garden. A symbol of our living faith for your home. At the same time, you can bring in donations for the Pride Center of WNY. The wish list includes: toiletries (such as: feminine hygiene products, soap, toothpaste, tooth brushes, body wash, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, disposable razors, etc.) and non-perishable groceries.

Please note that items should be new and unopened.

In-Person Vespers Services Every Friday, 7pm

Vespers services are short casual worship gatherings. Come for candlelight, music, poetry and reflections. Here's the musical line-up for June: June 4, Martha Malkiewicz; June 11, Rick Strauss, June 18, Phil Nicolai; and June 25 Rick Strauss again. Every Friday night, 7-7:30pm, outside the Garden Entrance of the church. We observe safe

Joys and Sorrows

- * Best birthday wishes go to Fran Manly, John and Tom Petrocelli, Kate Silver and Ryan Knowles.
- * Congratulations to Laura Petrocelli who is graduated with a master's in social work on May 15.
- * We send healing thoughts to Marion Reslow who is recovering with a broken hand and cracked ribs after an accident.

Music Notes – April 2021

Daniel Bassin, Music Director

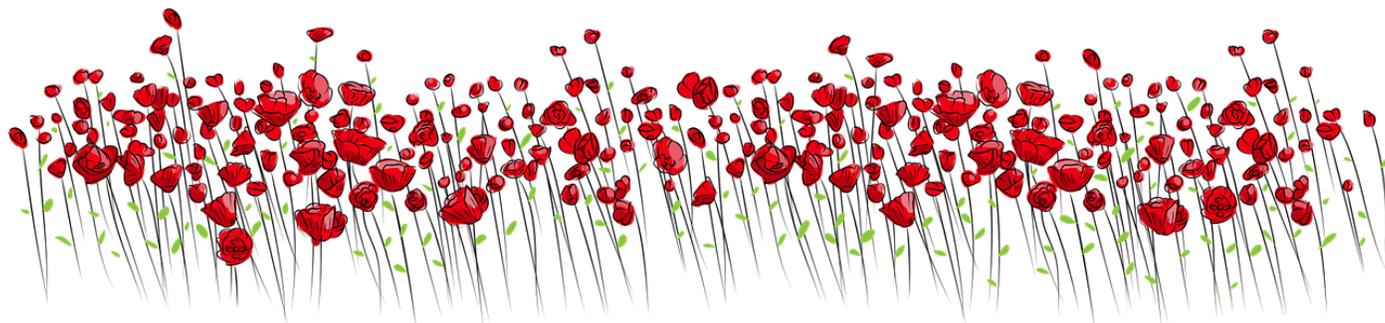


This month, we celebrate Pride, and we join hundreds of congregations in asking the Soul Matters thematic question, *What does it mean to be a People of Play?*

Our first service of the month – Pride Sunday, June 6th – features Rev. Joan Montagnes’s service, *Divine Play*. Our service music features works by Henry Cowell (1897-1965), Ethel Smyth (1858-1944), and Billy Strayhorn (1915-1967) alongside the hymns *Morning Has Broken* and *’Tis a Gift to be Simple*. It begins with Jonathan Vogtle on our Sanctuary Steinway in Cowell’s ecstatic percussive piano piece, *Anger Dance*. Our solo vocal quartet of Jessie Downs, Helen Lowry, Matthew Spaulding, and Michael Harris will offer up the opening scene of Dame Ethel Smyth’s *Fête Galante* “A Dance-Dream in One Act,” and Jonathan will conclude the service with another piece from that work. Finally, your in-house Cornette-and-Piano duo will offer up Strayhorn’s Shakespeare-inspired *The Star-Crossed Lovers*.

On June 13th, we welcome Rev. Tandi Rogers for *Play as Spiritual Practice and a Way Through*. We begin with an early piano piece by John Cage (1912-1992) *In a Landscape*. Selections from a collection of piano pieces written by contemporary Hungarian composer, György Kurtág (b. 1926) over the past five decades, *Játékok* (“Games”) will be featured as examples of the creative/spiritual/emotional practice of an artist’s lifelong engagement in *Play*. The love song, *Naima*, by John Coltrane (1926-1967) will be heard by our brass-and-keys duo, and the service will conclude with the *Album Leaf*, Op. 58 by Russian composer/mystic, Alexander Scriabin (1871-1915).

Our annual Flower Communion service takes place on June 20th – *A Living Communion*, with Rev. Joan Montagnes. Your UUCB Choir will again record a safely-distanced in-person session on beloved choral repertoire, featuring one of the “Devotional Songs” by Jean Berger (1909-2002) *A Rose Touched by the Sun’s Warm Rays* as well as the Hebrew folk love song, *Erev Shel Shoshanim* (“Evening of Roses”). Service music will also include Billy Strayhorn’s *Lotus Blossom* and a keyboard Toccata by Nikolai Kapustin (1937-2020). Finally, we end the month with guest preacher, Bobby Withrow’s June 27th service, *Bending the Arc of Justice*, which will feature the justice-themed hymns *What Wondrous Love*, *For All That is Our Life, We Shall Overcome*, and *Lift Every Voice and Sing*. We look forward to *Playing* all of this music for each of you this month!



The world premiere of Jessie Downs' new opera 'The Second Sight' is coming to our church - [June 26th & January 27th, 2021](#)



The world premiere of 'The Second Sight' an opera in three acts with words and music by Jessie Downs, our soprano soloist since 2017, will be premiered Saturday June 26th at 7:00pm and Sunday June 27th 2021 at 2:00pm in our church sanctuary! Composed for her PhD in Music Composition at the University of Buffalo, the opera is a very personal project for Jessie that has been 4 years in the making. After having to postpone the production last year due to COVID-19, we are thrilled to finally be able to help bring this special event to life.

'The Second Sight' is a mythic tale exploring the spiritual connections between generations of women. The music conjures mystical spaces and psychological dramas utilizing a sound palette inspired by a combination of bel canto, folk, and experimental music. The story centers around Diskana, a young woman with a clairvoyant ability called "second sight" who foresees the death of a young child (Sashatya) feeling the pain of the child's grieving mother (Freyaria). Diskana vows to defy fate and attempt to intervene to prevent the child's death. Supernatural forces ultimately weave together the lives of mystic, mother, and child in unexpected ways.

The production features world-renowned mezzo-soprano Ola Rafalo as Diskana, director of UB choirs soprano Claudia Brown as Freyaria, Jessie as Sashatya, and members of her ensemble Sotto Voce Vocal Collective as meddling Spirits - including church member Beth White as the Water Spirit.

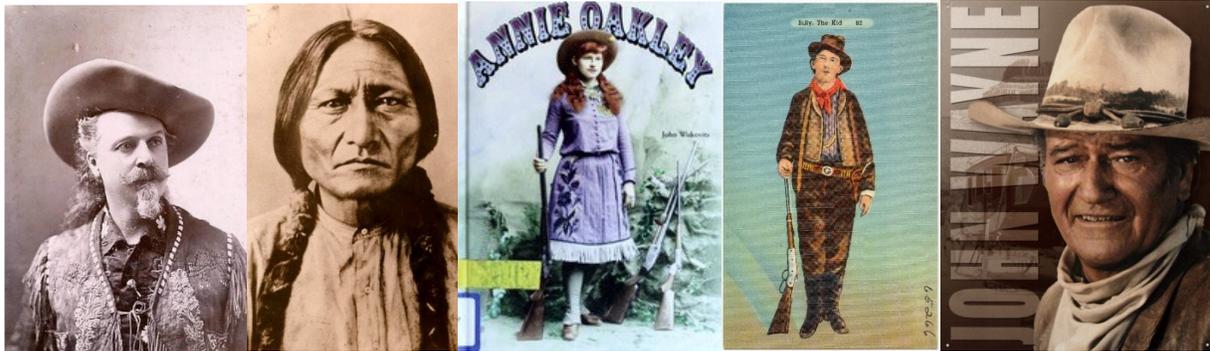
Jessie's personal story was the catalyst for creating 'The Second Sight,' as a few years ago her family experienced two great losses: her half sister Sasha at 2 years old from an undetected brain malfunction, and her maternal grandmother after years of health struggles. She wanted to write a work in response to these experiences that attempted to grapple with the strangeness of losing a child, and the different but just as profound mourning of a family matriarch. Although the subject matter may seem heavy, Jessie says that the opera is ultimately hopeful. "I want people to walk away from the experience thinking about death in a new light - as a transition into some new state we don't quite understand. While grief can be terrible, it can also teach us about our deep connections to one another and the earth. The love we have for someone never dies, and so I think our loved ones live on through us. After a year of so much loss, I think this is a message we all need to hear."

Tickets for the shows are available at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-second-sight-a-new-opera-tickets-139116183249>. Seating will be limited, so get yours today!

To donate to the project, you can go to <https://www.asiwny.org/donate/>, scroll down to "Donate to a Fiscal Sponsor Client" and write "for Sotto Voce" in the NOTES section of your payment. To learn more about donating goods or time, contact Jessie at jessiedowns311@gmail.com.

Stay tuned for more about the production at www.sottovocevocalcollective.com or follow the ensemble on FB <https://www.facebook.com/sottovocevocalcollective>.

Adult Education



“GO WEST, YOUNG MAN!”

The History, Mythology & Art of The American West

Michael Harris, instructor

**Sponsored by Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo
11 Online Zoom Meetings; Wednesdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m.**

June 2 to August 18, 2021 (no class on June 23)

Cost: \$75 for full course, or \$10 per session

We examine the westward expansion of 19th century America, and how it shaped our nation’s character and imagination – the folks who settled there, the legendary figures of the West, and the artists who captured the spirit of this new-found land!

To register, send your check, made out to UUCB, to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo, 695 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14222. The church office will send the Zoom meeting number and instructions for logging-in to your email address. For information, call 885-2136, or email at office@buffalouu.org.

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo Relational Covenant A Work in Process, May 2021

WHY DOES A CHURCH NEED A COVENANT?

Because we belong to a free and non-credal church, we, the members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo, choose to join ourselves together in love and promise.

We acknowledge that we are human and flawed; we know that conflict is inevitable.

Therefore when we have wronged, or harmed, or hurt another, or when we ourselves have been wronged or harmed or hurt, a covenant exists to encourage us to move toward accountability instead of avoiding accountability.

A covenant points the way to healing. It begins the process of repair that can nourish and comfort, build back trust, and ultimately, it can carve out new paths of hope and faith. Click [HERE](#) to read more ...



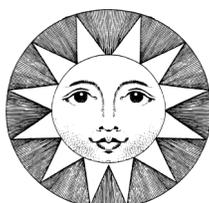
June Share-the-Plate: [Pride Center of WNY](#)



Since our inception, the Pride Center has been at the forefront of advocacy around issues relating to LGBTQ health, drawing on our close connections to community to identify emerging issues and create dialogue around these issues with policy makers and researchers. Over the years, we've developed support groups to help those who are struggling with issues around sexual orientation, gender identity, substance use and trauma. We organize events and activities to help foster a sense of community and to reduce social isolation faced by so many of our LGBTQ+ elders.

Throughout the pandemic, we remained open, moving many of our services to virtual spaces and continuing to address the epidemic of HIV by providing at-home HIV test kits. We checked in with community members, provided meals for seniors during the holidays, and amplified our efforts to identify LGBTQ+ affirming mental health providers to meet the increasing requests for support.

Pride month approaches and we're slowly reintroducing in-person programming at the Center. We will continue virtual programming and plan to host outdoor events throughout the summer. To learn more about us, visit pridecenterwny.org or find us on Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter.



BOARD REPORT

Greetings to you all from the Board of Trustees!

We are looking for delegates to GA, which will be virtual again this year. The theme is “Circle ‘Round for Justice”. GA will be happening June 23-27. Registration is \$200.00, but financial assistance is available....especially if you are willing to be a delegate! Interested? Let us know. All delegates must be certified.

Meanwhile, back inside the hedge, repairs to the masonry on the roof were recommended by the Fixed Assets Team and were approved. This was an emergency repair and was dealt with by RE Kelly, who have done oodles of work for us over the years. We continue to review the lengthy assessment report of Foit, Albert, et al. as well as the annual report of Fixed Assets in attempts to prioritize projects in terms of need and available resources.

We also continue to review the recommendations of the task force charged with all that entails returning to in-person, or rather dual-platform worship. We have learned during this pandemic that many folks join for worship online who would not otherwise be able or willing to come to church. We don't want to leave them behind when we begin to return to the sanctuary. The tech team is working hard to get us up to date with cameras and live-streaming equipment so that everyone at home and in the sanctuary can get the most out of the experience.

Martha Malkiewicz, Tracey Kassman, Kathleen Powers, Michael Hill, Bridget Evans, John Petrocelli, Lynn Mancuso

Our Generous Congregational Gifts!

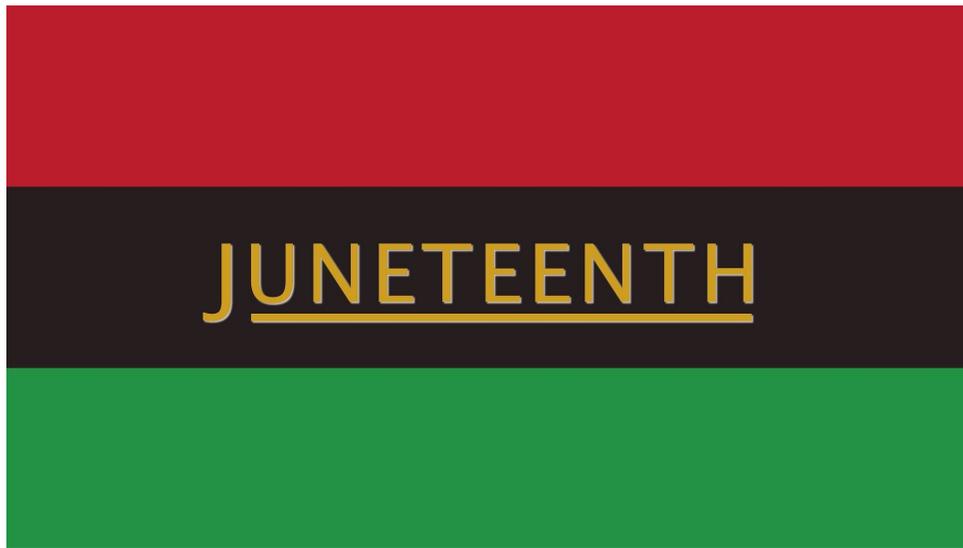
Thanks to our generous congregation, in March, we raised \$401.50 for UUA Disaster Relief Fund to help them continue their mission of providing grants throughout the country that help in repairing damage to buildings, relocating people to temporary locations, and supporting local partner organizations that provide services to the community at large.

Widow and Widowers Circle



At this point we are not meeting at all but I am available by email (collinsb@buffalo.edu) or by phone (648 4455) or text (867 9628). Rev. Joan has offered the church zoom for a meeting if there is enough interest. Let me know by email, phone, or text if you want such a meeting.. Stay safe! Namaste, Bonnie

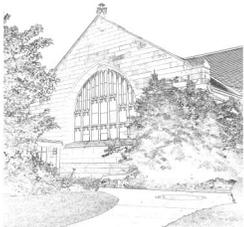




**We gather in loving community, inspiring one another,
to transform ourselves, to create a more just and
compassionate world**

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo

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Care Network: Ginny Vaughan 716-768-1077 wixsonsg@gmail.com	Gatekeeper: Sara Kirkland office@buffalouu.org	Administrator for Finance: Donna Sentz donnasentz@buffalouu.org	Organist/ Accompanist: Jonathan Vogtle
Nursery Care Coordinator: Morgan Silver		<p style="text-align: center;">Newsletter (submissions due by the 15th) newsletter@buffalouu.org</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Weekly Announcements (submissions due by NOON Wednesday) announcements@buffalouu.org</p>	



A chalice alit since 1831

A sanctuary on the National Registry of Historic Places

