

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo



JUNE 2020 NEWSLETTER

Gather ~ Inspire ~ Transform



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



Once upon a time, in Czechoslovakia, on a June Day in 1923 when Nature was proclaiming the arrival of summer, a Unitarian minister named Norbert Capek was worried for the people. The First World War had recently ended, and people were in need of healing and restoration. They were scattered in body and soul. Norbert felt the need for a ritual that would bind people more closely together and give them hope; something a little different from the traditional Christian communion service.

As he pondered this need, he walked. As he walked, Norbert felt the grace of the flowers wash over him. Blooms and blossoms splashed color up hillsides and across meadows, in people's gardens and over roadside medians. He had an idea.

The next Sunday all the people in the congregation were asked to bring a flower to church and lay the flower upon the altar. Vibrance and beauty heaped to overflowing in vases the size of washbasins. Norbert blessed the flowers, each a unique messenger of love. A gorgeous, messy bouquet of community. Then every person came up to the altar and took from the vase a flower different from the one they brought. There was enough for all and still the altar was graced by their gifts. This was the first Flower Communion Ceremony, a living, sharing communion to bring the people together in body and soul.

Throughout his ministry, Rev. Norbert Capek called for faith, peace, justice and love. Values we hold high in our worship services today. His congregation understood and enjoyed the Flower Communion with more passion and compassion as the years passed and the Second World War broke. It gave them hope, and reminded them that despite the desperate days, they were not alone. They were together, body and soul. Sadly, Norbert's liberal religious voice was a threat to the Nazis, so they sent him to a concentration camp where he died.

Norbert Capek lives on every June when Unitarian congregations around the globe celebrate the Flower Communion together. We hold ours on the last Sunday of the regularly scheduled church year. That's Sunday, June 21.

We need the ritual even more than usual this year. Care for our bodies and souls has forced us to drift into an unnatural isolation. We can no longer gather each week at church. We need a living, sharing ritual to celebrate our blessed, gorgeous, messy community.

And so, I invite you, every one of you, to join me in this year's Flower Communion. Send a picture of a flower to Karen Streech at newsletter@buffalouu.org Get the kids and the grand parents involved. Draw a picture and mail it to the church. Digital photo, finger paint, drawn in wet sand, chalk on the sidewalk, a photo ripped from a magazine, a botanical diagram, collage, tattoo or papier mâché. Take the picture with your phone, tablet, SLR, or polaroid (though digital pictures are preferred).

Send your flower into the church by June 15 and we will lay it on our shared virtual altar in a photo montage during the zoom service.

We have celebrated the Flower Communion for years. This year, during the coronavirus pandemic, we will celebrate it with even more passion and compassion than ever before. The ritual holds an elevated meaning. It gives us hope, and reminds us that despite the desperate days, we are not alone. We are together in a beautiful congregation of body and soul.

Yours in faith and affection, Joan

Sunday Morning Worship Online

What does it mean to be people of Compassion?

Join us for worship at 10:30am on Sundays; either by computer at <https://uuma.zoom.us/j/367428065> or phone +1 646 876 9923 and use the password 367428065

Pulpit Previews

June 7: Still Proud, Joan Montagnes

We may not be able to hold a parade this year, but it is still LGBTQ Pride Sunday! Love is Love.

June 14: Lovable, Loved, Loving, Joan Montagnes

A reflective service on compassion. Sometimes, the hardest thing to hear is that you are precious and embraced in love. Sometimes it is even harder to feel that we can love.

June 21: Share the Blessings, Joan Montagnes and Sarah Martin

This is our annual Flower Communion Sunday. Celebrate life and hope together. Don't forget to send your flower picture to newsletter@buffalouu.org for the service!

June 28: Sharing Our Words, Sarah Martin

For three months, our Young UUs Writing Group has met weekly to explore what it means to write as Unitarian Universalists. We have learned about writing styles, perspective, character, and story development, and connecting with our audiences. Join us for a special service created by these talented young members of our congregation.

Joys and Sorrows

We offer our deepest sympathies to Laurine Bane and her family. Laurine's husband Kirk recently passed away after a long battle with cancer.

We also offer compassion to Sylvia Coles. Sylvia's husband, Bob, died peacefully on May 14. They had been married 67 years.

Our hearts are with the all the loved ones who cannot grieve together, embrace, or hold memorial services until the pandemic is under control.

Congratulations go to Matthew Spaulding, our tenor soloist, who just received his bachelor's degree in Music and Voice, and to our often guest star pianist, Alex Huddleston, who just received his PhD. In Music Composition.

Brown Bag Lunch with the Minister

Every day, 7 days each week, 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, click this link <https://uuma.zoom.us/j/138000249> 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!

Rev. Joan's Identity Used and Abused!

Many emails that look like they are from Rev. Joan have gone out to church members asking for emergency assistance in the form of gift cards. They are not from Rev. Joan. Rev. Joan will never:

- Ask you for gift cards via an email
- Send you an email on an account ending with gmail.com – **trust only her buffalouu.org account**

If you receive one of these emails, block the sender so they will be unable to send you any more requests. Sadly, there is nothing the church can do to stop the emails because they do not come from the church.

Religious Education & Adult Faith Development News



Sarah Martin, Director of Religious Education

Summer RE Begins on Sunday, June 14!

This Summer, Religious Education will be a little different. Under usual circumstances, when we're all meeting together in the same place, summer religious education at UUCB is a casual, community-building hang out each Sunday. This year, we want to keep those bonds strong, welcome newcomers, and deepen our connection to each other and our Unitarian Universalist values. Each Sunday we'll meet at 1 pm on Zoom for Family Religious Education. Children and youth are welcome to attend on their own, but we encourage families to participate together. We'll learn about Unitarian Universalist history, explore how our UU values inform the way we engage in the world around us, and share in activities, stories,

and songs together.

Sunday, June 14 - Sunday, August 30, 1 pm

Help Wanted for the Online Youth Con

We are looking for volunteers who can be present for some of the online programming during the youth conference that our high school youth group is planning for the third week in June. Volunteers will need to pass a background check, and be available for one or two (or more, if desired) workshop slots in order to help us insure a safe number of adults "on site". If you would like to witness our amazing youth in action and help them carry out this con they have worked so hard to plan, please email lifespan@buffalouu.org.

Adult Faith Development

UU and You

Saturday, June 13, 10 am – 12 pm

Do you want to learn more about Unitarian Universalism? Have you been coming to the church for years but think you might enjoy a UU refresher? Join us for an exploration of your personal UU journey, a trip through our collective history as Unitarian Universalists, and an exciting exploration of what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist. This class welcomes potential new members as well as folks who have been around for a long time.

Facilitators: Julie Taylor and Shaun Doyle

Free of charge

This class will take place on Zoom.

To register, email lifespan@buffalouu.org

Upcoming Classes

We are in the process of putting together a UU Cross Stitch group and a summer class on UU History for adults. We are looking for two facilitators for the UU History Class. If you are interested in facilitating an adult curriculum on UU History, please email lifespan@buffalouu.org

Volunteer Facilitators Wanted!

Would you like to help us bring great programming on UU History, UU Theology, Spirituality, and more to our congregation? We are looking for volunteers who are interested in facilitating these programs. No experience is necessary and we will be using vetted curriculum, so you are not responsible for creating content.

We also are always looking for new original class/discussion group/workshop ideas, and if you have something great percolating, we'd love to hear from you!

Please email lifespan@buffalouu.org if you are interested in facilitating Adult Faith Development opportunities!

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

Covenant Group Ministry News

A Covenant Group May Be Just What You Are Searching For.

We are holding space for you.

The reality of this moment is that we are all being impacted in one way or another. It is clear we are not going to be able to simply resume the types of gatherings we used to have. A Covenant group can be a way for you to develop deeper connections during this time when we are apart.

For those of us who were already participating in a Covenant group, we have been able to offer support and a reflective space for each other through our monthly zoom meetings. We have been grateful for the opportunity to share deeply about the ways that this experience has changed us in both our outer and our inner lives.

At the heart of UUCB's Covenant Group Ministry is our commitment to strengthen the culture of our church as one in which we listen to each other, respect each other, and trust each other. Each month we return to the safe sacred (virtual) space that we have created together, where we can reflect, share and deeply listen.

“There is a quality of listening that is possible among a circle of human beings, who by their attentiveness to one another create a space in which each person is able to give voice to the truth of his or her life. There is the miracle of authentic narrative, made possible by listening that holds still long enough to let the truth be told. Where there is this kind of listening and speaking, a new kind of community is born - a community of life.”

- Rebecca Parker, Unitarian Theologian

Covenant groups are for both church members, as well as those who are considering whether UUCB may become their church home. Groups offer an opportunity to explore our congregation's monthly ministry theme in more depth. Each group consists of 8 committed members, with two trained facilitators.

If you are interested in learning more, please contact Juli Van Woert at JVW61@aol.com or email us at covenantgroups@buffalouu.org.

When Is An Auction Not Just An Auction? When it's the UUCB FUN & FELLOWSHIP CELEBRATION !

We live in a changing world. Crises like this help us reprioritize what's important in our lives. And one thing we KNOW is important is the FUN and FELLOWSHIP that our Auction guarantees.

The 2020 Auction may not **look** like those in year's past, and we may not match the \$17,000 that you contributed to the church through our 2019 Auction, but we are not discouraged! Now, more than ever, we need to build relationships and to celebrate our connections while we support the work of UUCB!

Over the last month, the Auction Team has been busy thinking of ways to insure another successful experience for all our generous donors and bidders. We are overflowing with “FUNDRAISING and FELLOWSHIP” ideas! And now is the time to reach out to our loyal donors and bidders to think of ways to be together, even if we have to be apart.



So . . . this is all we ask!

Be a Donor! Donors play an essential role in our success. We wouldn't have an Auction without you! Now is the time to get creative and get motivated. We are starting to put together a catalogue of ideas and would love to include something from you – a new twist to an item you have offered in the past, or something brand new! If you have not donated an item or event to the Auction before, this is the year to jump in! Our Auction team will enthusiastically help you crystallize your ideas!

Prepare to Be a Bidder! Check the weekly e-blast for articles reminiscing about shared times in past auctions, and for a sneak preview of some of our 2020 Auction and Fundraising Delights!

Be a “Creative Force”! Share your ideas for how to make the 2020 Auction a success! Contact the Auction Team through Juli Van Woert JVW61@aol.com, Maria Testa marialtesta@gmail.com or Andrea Burke aburkeharris@gmail.com.

Don't miss out on the fun! Thank you for your generosity and support.

Beyond the Hedge: Denomination and Interfaith Connections

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



Scholarships for the General Assembly of Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

Every year members from all the Unitarian Universalist congregations in North America and around the world gather in spirit. We worship together, we set our goals for the future, make statements about social justice, and meet kindred spirits on the journey. There is nothing like getting together with 4,000 – 10,000 UUs I inspire a person's faith.

This year General Assembly will be held entirely online. It won't be the same as other years, but there are added benefits to this new format:

- Participants won't have to pay for expensive lodging, food and travel
- The carbon footprint will be practically non-existent, and
- Everybody will be physically separated, yet spiritually together during this year of coronavirus

Registration for General Assembly is \$150. [Our social Justice Ministry Team has enough funds set aside for four full registration scholarships.](#) If you would like a scholarship or if you know of someone who would like a scholarship, please contact Rev. Joan minister@buffalouu.org Preference will be given to those in financial need and Youth.

UAIM – Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry News

Richard Gilbert in ‘We Bid You Welcome’ says *We bid you welcome. Who enters this hall as a homecoming, Who have found here room for your spirit. Who find in this people a family. Whoever you are, whatever you are, wherever you are in your journey. We bid you welcome.*

A few weeks ago, Rev. Joan challenge us to ponder (when we can finally step over the threshold again to the sanctuary) what do we want to become. UAIM (Universal Access & Inclusion Ministry) hopes that we all can be welcoming to one another, as well as the people who walk over our threshold for the first, second, or umpteenth time. We all come with different expectations of what the decorum should be during the service. UAIM would like to encourage everyone to be more accepting of others. Yes, a crying baby might be annoying, every parent knows that. Instead of making a frown, maybe put yourself in their shoes and smile and give the parent a word of understanding. If a person seems uncomfortable sitting in the wooden pew, you could show them the padded chairs near the Parish Hall Doors. As we walk over the church’ threshold again, may we think of the needs of others, and as a family, be tolerant of our differences.

As we continue to live in this pandemic, may we continue to reach out to each other. Striving to connect with people through e-mail, phone, Facebook, Zoom, etc. helps us and them to get through this quarantine. Everyone can use a Friendly Hello.

Again, if anyone is looking for a good Netflix movie, [Crip Camp](#) is very engaging. The movie is about people who have disabilities fighting to enact the 1973 Civil Rights Legislation know as Section 504. This is before the 1990 America with Disabilities Act. During the summer, there is going to be a series of talks by Disability Rights Advocates stemming from [Crip Camp](#).

Social Justice Ministry

During this time of pandemic, many of us are squeezed to the limit juggling the responsibilities of work and managing children all day. But some of us have had our “down” time expand and are looking for meaningful ways to contribute to the community while maintaining physical distancing recommendations and staying healthy.

The Justice Ministry Team invites you to join our newly formed Advocacy Team. As a member of the team, you will contact legislators, policymakers, friends, family, and neighbors in order to advance a justice cause. This may take the form of phone calls, emails and/or postcards and you will be expected to contribute in only those ways you feel comfortable and have the time to devote.

Please contact Kathy Taylor (ktay0409@gmail.com or 203 605-1544) to join the **Advocacy Team**.

Share-the-Plate June – [Feedmore WNY](#)

FeedMoreWNY is working diligently to serve our community during this crisis in delivering much-needed food into the hands of those who need it most. We have taken on hundreds of older adults who need home delivered meals service, and our partner pantries and soup kitchens are serving more community members than ever. Our mobile pantry distributions are expanding delivering to more locations in Western New York and volunteers are packing and distributing emergency food kits to struggling families. Monetary donations are greatly appreciated help provide food and meals for those in need.



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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Administrator for Finance: Donna Sentz donnasentz@buffalouu.org	Nursery Care Coordinator: Morgan Silver	Newsletter (submissions due by the 15th) newsletter@buffalouu.org Weekly Announcements (submissions due by NOON Wednesday) announcements@buffalouu.org	



A chalice alit since 1831

A sanctuary on the National Registry of Historic Places

