



Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo

SEPTEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

Gather - Inspire - Transform



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



We don't need to ask what it means to be a People of Possibility. We are already a People of Possibility. If only we widen our vision, we can perceive the almost infinite paths available. The universe opens itself to us at every turn. We already are a People of Possibility. Our challenge lies in embracing the full extent of possibility before us.

You come to a fork in the road. Already, you have limited yourself to only two ways – this way or that way, right or left, male or female, right or wrong, victim and offender, the well-worn path or the road less travelled?

What would happen if you could just sit in a tree like the Cheshire cat and grin?

Maybe the road before us isn't actually forked at all. Maybe there are more than two choices. Maybe it is a spectrum of time, space, relationships, color, power, health, truth, gender, culture and spirit. Possibility on possibility stretching out in every direction.

Alice thought, even in Wonderland, that she faced only two options and she didn't know which to embrace. She missed the point. She didn't embrace Wonderland's enormous variety of beckoning possibility. She just let the possibilities happen to her and most of the time she was very unhappy about the outcome. Every path leads down another rabbit hole into a different Wonderland worth embracing.

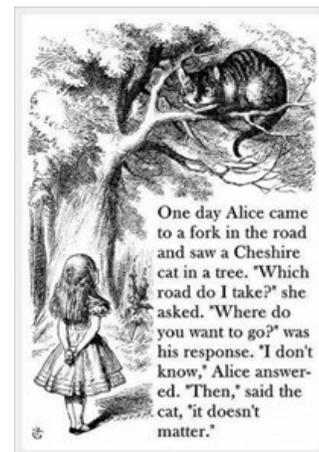
Sometimes we chose to make a difficult decision about our future. The result: everything gets messy and painful and angry. Our beloveds stop understanding each other, stop wanting to understand each other, stop looking for a way to be in a continually forming and re-forming community. We stop listening. Blame and finger-pointing restrict our vision and a single story is the only story that is told. We become a people not embracing possibility. We get stuck.

In his novel *Jayber Crow*, Wendell Berry described his church as a community as:

"...imperfect and irresolute but held together by the frayed and always fraying, incomplete and yet ever-holding bonds of the various sorts of affection. There had maybe never been anybody who had not been loved by somebody, who had been loved by somebody else, and so on and on... It was a community always disappointed in itself, disappointing its members, always trying to contain its divisions and gentle its meanness, always failing and yet always preserving a sort of will toward goodwill."

That's us. May we remember through our shared adventures in Wonderland that our paths are many, that each of us loves and is loved, is disappointed and disappointing, and that together our growing and forming preserves a transformative will toward goodwill and grace.

Yours in faith and affection, Rev. Joan Montagnes



NEWS FROM THE BOARD—Congregational Town Hall Meetings

As many of you know, our beloved church is going through challenging times. There are questions that people need answered. The Board is inviting the congregation to gather as a community at a Town Hall meeting where your questions can be asked and answered.

There are two times for people to meet: Saturday, September 11 at 2:00 and Monday September 13 at 7:00. If we find that we need a third time, we will set another up.

The Town Hall meetings may not be where our emotions will be resolved. Some of us feel pain, or anger, or grief. Those emotions need the care and healing that Restorative Circles can provide. We do not yet have the time set for those Restorative Circles, but we will have those times set soon after the Town Halls have taken place.

We are reaching outside of our congregation to Rev. Paul Langston-Daley to help with our Town Hall and our Restorative Circles. Rev. Paul has a background in organizing, social justice work, and engaging restorative practices with congregations in conflict.

Now is the time to live with compassion, to practice deep-listening, and to open ourselves to new truths. Come join a Town Hall meeting!

- Martha Malkiewicz, Tracey Kassman, Bridget Evans, John Petrocelli, Michael Hill, Lynn Mancuso, Katherine McGriff Powers



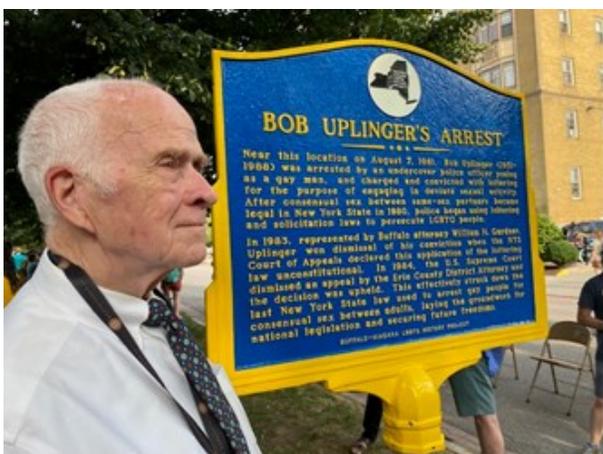
Joys and Sorrows

On August 28 we celebrated the life of Dr. Carl Granger, long-time and beloved member of our congregation.

Our thoughts are with Carol Condon as she recovers from serious surgery.

We offer our deepest sympathies to Barbara Brown and all the friends of Beck Brown. Beck, a long-time member of the choir, passed from this life on August 18.

Bill Gardner is honored at Buffalo-Niagara LGBTQ History Project Ceremony.



On August 7 a plaque was unveiled at Irving Place and North Street marking the place where Bob Uplinger was arrested via entrapment measures in 1981. The charge: "loitering in a public place for the purpose to engage in deviate sexual intercourse or other sexual behavior of a deviate nature." Uplinger engaged the legal assistance of William Gardner, of our congregation. The case was fought over many years and the team finally brought it to the Supreme Court and won in a landmark case for American LGBTQAI+ rights. Bill Gardner was feted at the event. Such a joy to see our elder celebrated and honored.

Pulpit Previews

Sept 5: Expanding Opportunity for Everyone, Sen. Sean Ryan

Senator Sean Ryan will discuss his work to ensure all New Yorkers have the opportunity to succeed. Senator Ryan has long been a champion of the most vulnerable members of society. He will deliver remarks about what government can do to improve people's lives, and how we can all play a role in moving our communities forward.

Sept 12: Gathering in Love, Rev. Joan Montagnes and Rev. Lisa Peterangelo

Our annual Ingather Sunday and Water Communion Ceremony! Celebrate the many streams that meet and merge and join as one to become our beloved congregation.

Sept 19: A Service in process, offering further exploration on Embracing Possibility.

Sept 26: Forgiveness and Transformation, Rev. Joan Montagnes

Every year Jews celebrate the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. A ten-day celebration of renewal and atonement. We forgive ourselves and each other. We begin again in love.



Religious Education & Faith Development News

Peace and greetings to all!

I'm Rev. Lisa Peterangelo, and I'm your Acting Director for Religious Education for this 2021-2022 school year. I'm honored to be here and look forward to journeying with you and the children as we all learn what this "new normal" looks like.

As I've spoken to many teachers and explored the classrooms, I can sense the pride in teaching and the love for the children. The greatest resource that this church has is the talent of its RE volunteers. Their devotion to the children and families are a true gift.

I've so enjoyed meeting many of you and having discussions centered around programming, tales from RE past and listening to your stories about how the pandemic has affected you. I am continually impressed as I hear about how the RE team continued to offer programming last year and kept the children engaged. The creativity of the RE team and their determination to continue to bring classes virtually is a testament to everyone's love of religious education and of this community.

This coming school year may bring continued challenges but with the level of professionalism that is in this church and sense of teamwork I know we can be successful.

My goals for this year are safely navigating the last months of the pandemic and eventually seeing the classrooms filled with children, teachers, advisors, and parents. When we can bring everyone back together for in-person teaching we will know that it's truly over.

So, in planning for this coming school year I've been thinking about what we can offer our children in terms of art, movement, and spirituality. As they say, it does take a village so I'm looking for those who would like to share their gifts with our children to help expand their thinking, learning and especially their hearts.

If you are inspired to join us in the RE program this year, please reach out to me. Our Workshop class is a multi-faceted program that will offer a variety of genres. Artists, yogis, craftspeople, and those from various spiritual traditions are invited to bring their gifts to the table.

We are also looking for those who believe in the beauty and benefits of Spirit Play. If you have ever wanted to explore this curriculum in our classrooms, please let me know.

And finally, I'm in need of a Religious Education Ministry Team and an Adult Faith Development Team. If you would like to be on either committee, contact me.

I can be reached at 716-885-2136, ext. 202 and my email is lpeterangelo@buffalouu.org

I look forward to meeting you all and together creating meaningful programming for our children and families.

Peace and all good things.

Lisa



Adult Education

IT TAKES A WOMAN! -- Achievement and Excellence From a Female Perspective **Michael Harris, instructor**

Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo, 695 Elmwood Avenue; Buffalo, NY 14222
13 Meetings: Wednesdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m., September 15 to December 15, 2021
Cost: \$75 for full course, or \$10 per session

The course will be given in-person at UUCB, with the option of switching to Zoom meetings. To register, send your check, made out to UUCB, to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo; 695 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14222.

For information, call 885-2136, or email us at office@buffalouu.org.

Margaret Thatcher once quipped "If you want something said, ask a man; if you want something done, ask a woman." This course will put a spotlight on the mighty deeds of women down through the ages in all walks of life. Though the history books tend to focus on the lives of great men, we will look at the 'her-stories' of the high achievement ladies who have spectacularly changed our world.



COURSE SYLLABUS

Session One (September 15): Renaissance Woman of the Middle Ages – Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179).

Session Two (September 22): Women Wielding Power – Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603) and Catherine the Great (1729-1796).

Session Three (September 29): The Feminists – Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1796), Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) and Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906).

Session Four (October 6): The Religionists – Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) and Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891).

Session Five (October 13): Pioneers of Nursing – Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) and Clara Barton (1821-1912).

Session Six (October 20): The Journalist – Nellie Bly (1864-1922); photojournalists Dorothea Lange (1895-1965) and Margaret Bourke-White (1904-1971).

Session Seven (October 27): The Scientist – Marie Curie (1867-1936).

No Class Session on November 3!

Session Eight (November 10): Women of Mystery – Anna Katharine Green (1846-1936) and Agatha Christie (1890-1973).

Session Nine (November 17): The Music Teacher – Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979).

Session Ten (November 24): The Congresswomen – Jeanette Rankin (1880-1973) and Margaret Chase Smith (1897-1995).

Session Eleven (December 1): The Lyricists – Dorothy Fields (1904-1974) and Carolyn Leigh (1928-1983).

Session Twelve (December 8): The Sportswoman – Babe Didrikson Zaharias (1911-1956).

Session Thirteen (December 15): The Novelist – Toni Morrison (1931-2019).

DRE Search Committee Update September 2021

The DRE Search Committee is working on an updated DRE job description. This is important work since it will help guide our search, advertise the aspects of the DRE role that are a priority to our church, and eventually, help to attract a new settled DRE.

In order for the Committee to do this important work, we need to hear from all of you, the congregation, about what you think are the important characteristics and aspects of our DRE. To help guide our work, we will be sending out a link to an online survey in September. We ask that you each answer the questions honestly as quickly as possible. We will make the link available via email and on the website. The faster you all answer, the quicker we can solidify our job description.

September Share-the-Plate: [Erie County Restorative Justice Coalition](#)

The Erie County Restorative Justice Coalition is a coming together of people from across our county who believe that conflicts are often best resolved by the people involved. By creating a safe space where all individuals involved in a conflict can come together and discuss what happened, who was harmed, and ways to repair the harm. Our ECRJC facilitators help to change the way our community addresses conflict and crime through a dialogue process.

We train Restorative Justice practitioners and organizations, host monthly community circles, facilitate Restorative Conferences for community members, organizations, and diversion programs with various police departments and the DA's office. Finally, we assist schools with training and implementation of Restorative Practices to create a culture of care and positive relationships, that will reduce the use of suspension and expulsion and end the school to prison pipeline.

We from ECRJC thank UUCB for your continued support of our work to bring restorative practices to schools, our court system, and neighborhoods! Come experience the power and grace of a circle with UUCB on the 2nd Tuesday of each month or at ECRJC's [practice circles and trainings!](#)

Our Generous Congregational Gifts!

Thanks to our generous congregation, we collected \$357.50 for The Pride Center of WNY. This helps with their mission to work with the community to make Western New York a safe, healthy, and satisfying place for LGBTQ people to live, work, and establish their families.



At our Access and Inclusion Ministry meeting on Wednesday, August 11, 2021 we discussed the wording on the UAIM page on the UU Church of Buffalo website. As usual we had a very interesting discussion with different ideas and perspectives (it is a fun group)!

We agreed that the most important thing to remember is that how disabled people choose to identify themselves and describe themselves is totally up to them. There is no right or wrong way.

We also acknowledged that over time language evolves and this applies to language about disability as well. The changes we are writing about here will also evolve over time. Currently there are, in general, two prevalent ways that we identify with disability in language: person-first and identity-first. Both options have implications for how we think about disability.

Many disability advocates agree that person-first language in many ways distances the person from the disability, ostensibly to separate the person from the negative connotations and stigma with which we have all been socialized. Many of us have been taught that person-first language is preferable, and some disabled individuals choose to identify as a person first, based on their personal orientation to disability. Example: I am a woman with a disability.

UAIM has decided to emphasize what is known as identity-first language. As a ministry we have agreed to be "loud and proud about disability! Identity-first language challenges negative connotations by claiming disability directly. Example: I am a disabled woman. It establishes that we are disabled by societal barriers, both attitudinal and physical.

UAIM embraces the word "disability" and also suggests avoiding euphemisms such as "special needs," "physically or mentally challenged," differently- or alternatively-abled, etc.

Covenant Group Ministry News

A Covenant Group May Be Just What You Are Searching For

Our Covenant Group Ministry has been transformed, and we now offer in-person, virtual and hybrid groups. *We are holding space for you.*

Despite this long period of physical separation, in order to minimize our vulnerability to Covid-19, regular participation in a Covenant group has been a way that many of us have developed even deeper connections during this time when we were 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 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.

Widow and Widowers Circle - Gathering of Grievers, Sept 12 at noon!



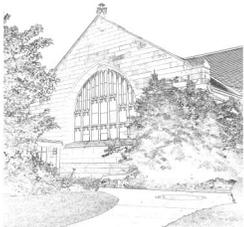
Because it is important that grief be shared to help integrate it into our lives, we are having a gathering of grievers. This is an enlargement of the Widows Group that we had before the pandemic. Now lets gather all grievers, no matter the source of our grief, on Sunday Sept 12th at noon in the Alliance Room to share our sorrow and offer support to each other. (Bring your lunch if you would like). For more info contact me via email (collinsb@buffalo.edu) or phone or text (716 867 9628). Namaste, Bonnie Collins



**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

695 Elmwood Ave. Buffalo New York 14222
716-885-2136 www.buffalouu.org

<p>Minister: Rev. Joan Montagnes minister@buffalouu.org</p>	<p>Administrator of Facilities and Communication: TBH office@buffalouu.org</p>	<p>Acting Director of Religious Education: Rev. Lisa Peterangelo lpeterangelo@buffalouu.org</p>	<p>Music Director: TBH office@buffalouu.org</p>
<p>Care Network: Ginny Vaughan 716-768-1077 wixsonsg@gmail.com</p>	<p>Gatekeeper: Sara Kirkland office@buffalouu.org</p>	<p>Administrator for Finance: Donna Sentz donnasentz@buffalouu.org</p>	<p>Organist/ Accompanist: Jonathan Vogtle</p>
<p>Nursery Care Coordinator: Morgan Silver</p>		<p>Newsletter (submissions due by the 15th) newsletter@buffalouu.org</p> <p>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

