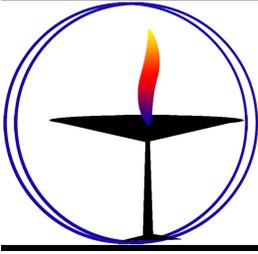


The UU Church of Buffalo

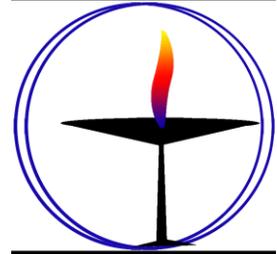


Gather – Inspire – Transform

November 2015 Newsletter

695 Elmwood Ave ∪ Buffalo, NY 14222

716-885-2136 - www.BuffaloUU.org



Yours in Faith...

Rev. Joan Montagnes

Our worship theme this month is “Covenant.”

Often when people hear about our faith they ask, “So what do you Unitarian Universalist folks believe?”

Usually we hem and haw and say something super-informative like, “Well gee, umm, we don’t, like, have any dogma...umm.” And our poor inquiring friends are left staring blankly at us and wondering if there is any “there” in our church or whether we are simply full of what-is-not.

Well we know there is indeed some solid, stick-to-your-ribs “there” at the heart and soul of our church. It might not look like what we see at the center of other faiths, but it is just as valid and we need to be able to talk about it clearly and confidently if we are to be taken seriously.

The word “religion” comes from the Latin *relegare*, which means to link, to yoke, to hold together. Although it is true that we have no dogma, doctrine or creed to hold us together, we have something else. We are held together by covenant.

Our covenant links us together as strongly as any belief system. Covenant is the fabric that joins Unitarian Universalist congregations, communities, and individuals together in a web of interconnection. Our covenant is the sacred set of promises we make as we walk together in community.

The word “covenant” is both a noun and a verb. It can be a written agreement among individual community members promising to behave in certain ways, and/or it can mean to engage in mutual promises of spirit with other people and communities.

Some questions we might ask ourselves this month are:

- Why do we make promises with each other?
- With whom do we make our promises?
- With what communities do we make our promises?
- How do we heal our broken hearts and our community after promises have been broken?



Our congregation will be engaging in three big covenantal events this month.

The first, will be the New Members Signing Ceremony. We are part of a long religious tradition that believes people are not born into their religion, rather we chose our religion freely as informed adults. When individuals wish to join our congregations, they indicate their desire to join in covenant with us by signing a membership book. We will be holding a New Member Signing Ceremony on Sunday, November 1, 12:30PM in the Alliance Room. If you wish to become a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo, please contact me minister@buffalouu.org or 885-2136.

Our second covenantal event this month is the ceremony marking the covenant between you, as a congregation, and myself. We will make promises to each other about how we will share the ministry of this church in the days to come. The Installation Ceremony will be held on Sunday, November 15 at 7:00PM and you are all invited. It is a fun event full of music, pomp, circumstance and tradition. Please come.

The third big covenantal event in November is the departure of our current Lifespan Faith Development Director, Sonja Jensen. Sonja has offered us tremendous gifts as a talented, full-time staff member. She supported and grew the structure and capacity of our religious education programming for children, youth and adults for five years. She also supported the Safety Ministry Team and the Universal Access and Inclusion Ministry Team. Together, Sonja, the other staff, and the congregation have built a creative shared ministry. That said, part of living, growing and being in covenanted community is understanding that individuals may leave that community. Among the promises we make to one another are the promises we make about belonging and leaving. Sonja has chosen to leave our community for her own very honorable reasons. Personally, I deeply appreciate everything Sonja has brought to the church and I wish her every good thing wherever her future leads her and her family.

These three big covenantal events in our church life are only three of the many covenantal experiences you will have this month inside and outside our church. I invite you to reflect on all the promises you and your community make, keep, break, re-make, and re-form. They are all part of this wild ride of soaring joys, plummeting disappointments and winding struggles of being human.

Yours in faith and affection, Rev. Joan

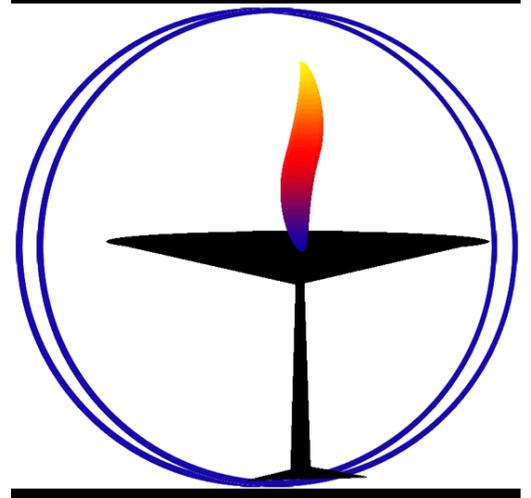
Joys and Sorrows

We rejoice with Mary Szczepanski who was hospitalized with cardiac issues. She has emerged healthier and happier.

Our hearts are with our youth who were friends with Lamont Yancey, a City Honor's student, who died suddenly and unexpectedly.

Jen Mernitz asks for our prayers for the Lopez family. Bill Lopez died last month.

Kaitlyn Steinberg is struggling with her health with grief after a death in her family. She is also joyful that she is now officially retired.





Pulpit Previews

Worship Theme: Covenant

A vast majority of people say the #1 Reason they come to church is “Community.” Our community is based on the ever-evolving, implicit and explicit promises that bind us together. May we always make room for one more at our welcome table. May our covenantal promises be made in love to inspire us and to transform ourselves and the world with gratitude and joy.

November 1 “Promise-Making and High Throttle Democracy”

Rev. Joan Montagnes

Politicians are always making wild promises during election season. We get all excited either “for” or “against.” The temperature goes up and there’s a lot of smoke in everyone’s engines, but are we getting anywhere?

November 8 “We All Need Somebody to Lean On”

Rev. Joan Montagnes

Our man Ralph Waldo Emerson was wrong. We are not and cannot be “Self-Reliant.” We are part of a beautiful, interdependent web of connection and relationship. There is absolutely no point in even trying to get through the trials and tribulations of this life on your own.

November 15 “We Belong to the City”

Crystal Rodriguez

Department Head, City of Buffalo Commission on Citizens' Rights and Community Relations

Our church walls cannot be barriers to the outside. We enter our sanctuary to be intellectually stimulated and spiritually uplifted, inspired and transformed so we may leave and become part of the greater community with more love, mindfulness and integrity. Opportunities abound!

November 22 “Plant Gratitude, Harvest Joy”

Rev. Joan Montagnes

Celebrate a joyful Thanksgiving service! Abundance! Gratitude! Life, however fragile, is a gift. May we count our blessings with graciousness.

November 29 “Healing the Broken Heart”

Rev. Joan Montagnes

And then there are the times when promises are broken, we feel abandoned and our faith is shattered. Where is the covenant then? Where is hope? How can we ever recover from that wound?

Good Vibrations

Barbara Kloberdanz

There is a chill in the air and somehow it is already November and we are looking forward to the “next big thing.” In this case – Rev. Joan’s installation on Sunday November 15 at 7PM. Please join in and invite your friends and neighbors as well. It will be great to see the sanctuary filled to overflowing. Our church is a busy place and all these good vibrations flow out into the community.

As I write this folks are planning a Chili lunch for us to enjoy as we kick-off our Stewardship campaign. I hope you will have participated in this joyful foodfest and turned in your pledge card at that time. This will help us get a good start on meeting our needs for the coming year, beginning January 2016. We have been running a deficit budget and it would be wonderful if we could turn that picture around. It’s a New Day and it really is up to you. I sense a great deal of enthusiasm these days – so if not now –when?



Our good vibrations allow for lots of good work as we go through the many changes to our governance that have taken place in the past few years. To many people just the idea of change is unsettling. Please try to give it all a chance. The Board of Trustees has Advisory Committees to do lots of work, and there are Ministry Teams that come under the jurisdiction of our Minister. Years ago every detail came before the Board and now we delegate questions and actions to our Committees. This has allowed many of us to continue to be enthusiastic about our prospects for the future. You can find much information on our website, thanks to the expertise of Karen Streech and Francis Montgomery. If you have a concern and you don’t know where to find help, please ask.

We have been reminded at the end of our services that we are not alone. Please join in with us. I look forward to it.

In the spotlight of the October Board of Trustees Meeting

By Julie Taylor

We are moving forward with revitalizing our Personnel Committee;

We are actively discussing the path forward with faith development as a staffing change compels us to have serious and strategic discussions that balance our mission with our financial reality;

We are clarifying governance structure by reclassifying Stewardship as a Task Force. They will report directly to the Board. It's a whole new category. We have Advisory Committees and we have Ministry Teams. We recognized that the Stewardship Task Force does not advise the Board, nor are they under the purview of the Minister.

We are artfully navigating our ability to dissent while strengthening our covenantal relationship.

Congregants are welcome to attend the Board of Trustees meetings to watch the governance of the Church in action. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, November 18th, at 7:00pm.

From the Director of Lifespan Faith Development

Farewell Dear Friends:

After much soul searching, I have decided to change careers. I will be leaving my position at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo on November 22 to take a position as a Financial Advisor for Edward Jones. While this may seem like a big change, my degree is in Accounting so it is a natural progression back into a higher earning profession now that my kids are largely grown.

I have come to love this community over the past five years, and it will be difficult to leave you, especially at this time when growth and optimism have returned to our community.

Rev. Margret often used the Nanny McPhee metaphor, and while I was not an interim, I feel a similar identification with the quote, “When you need me but do not want me, I must stay. When you want me but do not need me, I must go.” When I arrived in August of 2010, Jesse Goldberg, as the chair of the religious education committee was holding the program together with a thread. There was no Faith Development Committee, no teachers recruited and no curriculum in place. Rev. Joel was on sabbatical and the Office Administrator was on a sick leave that she never returned from. I had no data base or even a working computer in my office when I arrived. Being from out of town, I knew no one. Somehow we got a program into place by that September.

Now you have a strong dedicated Faith Development Ministry Team, a paid nursery coordinator, trained and committed Spirit Play teachers, 3-4 teachers per class, trained OWL facilitators at all levels, and a Safety Team to make sure we’re looking out for the congregation’s well-being, especially in the case of the children. While we lost numbers during the interim time, our capacity to serve larger numbers of children well has grown. In addition, we have a budding Young Adult and Adult Faith Development Ministry. This will need support to grow and develop, much as our garden does in the years to come.

From where I sit I see a bountiful harvest. I am so thankful that I have had this opportunity to work with this community. The community has grown in health and awareness so much in the past five years. Now with the joyful guidance of Reverend Joan you are poised to emerge on the scene in Buffalo as a place of transformation and a strong force for Social Justice in the community.

I hope to return to this community as a member at some time in the future, but at this time out of respect for my successor, I will follow the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) Code of Professional Practices and leave room for them to become established here. I will step back from all church activities for about a year. I will be in communication with the minister and my successor to be sure that the time is right before I return.

My wishes for the congregation:

- Keep showing up and doing your part! It’s only your community as much as you make it so.
- Prioritize religious education/faith development. There are lessons here you can’t get anywhere else.
- Be kind to your staff, especially my successor. Give them all the support you would give me. A lot of work goes on to make Sunday mornings happen!
- Give generously to the stewardship campaign, and keep building capacity. There is so much that this community wants to stand for, but it all needs financial support to become a reality.
- Hold each other gently and securely in this sacred covenantal community. The promises we give to one another are the glue that holds our diverse theologies together in the interdependent web that supports us all.

It has been a blessing to serve you. Until we meet again...Namaste,
Sonja Jensen, CRE

Music Notes – November, 2015

By Daniel Bassin, Music Director

Please mark your calendars now: *December Music Sunday* will take place on Sunday, December 20th, 2015, and feature the UUCB Choir, Soloists, and members of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra in Part 2 of JS Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*

After such a joyous, energizing, and also very musical start to this special church year with our new minister, it should come as no surprise that there are even more reasons to celebrate – and even more music, – as we finish out 2015! December will feature not only our annual winter Music Sunday, but also a number of exciting guest performers and ensembles, which I'll detail in next month's column. Our November services begin on Sunday the 1st (with an adjustment of our clocks for the end of daylight savings time), with a monthly theme centering on *Covenant*.

Our first Sunday in November is entitled "Promise-Making and High Throttle Democracy." Soloists Michael Harris and Michael Sulzbach will offer up Leonard Cohen's anthem, "Democracy" from his album *The Future*, released shortly after the 1992 presidential election of Bill Clinton. This service will also feature music by UU composer (and music director of the Arlington Street Church, in Boston, MA), Mark David Buckles. Our Choir and Soloists will perform all of Mark's settings of the Unitarian Universalist seven Principles this season, beginning this Sunday with the 1st Principle: "We believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person;" and 5th: "We believe in the right of conscience and the use of democratic process within our congregations and in society at large."

Rev. Montagnes's installation will take place on Sunday evening, November 15th and our Choir is overjoyed to share their gifts in this auspicious event – we look forward to celebrating in fellowship with each of you, and with our wider community!

A very special addition to our regular service music in November will be the UUCB Choir's participation in the 40th and final production of Opera Sacra – an organization dedicated to staging first-class professional operatic productions on religious themes in WNY, founded and directed by Fr. Jack Ledwon of the St. Joseph University Parish. Jack came to our church last spring to hear our Music Sunday service which featured Anton Bruckner's Mass No. 2 in E-minor. He was so taken by our Choir that he immediately invited us to be a part of this year's work - Arthur Honegger's remarkable 1935 *Joan of Arc at the Stake*. Performances will be led by Maestra Doreen Rao, and feature the UUCB Choir, the Buffalo Master Chorale, the Buffalo Niagara Youth Chorus, and professional actors, soloists, and orchestra. The two performances of this production will take place at 8pm on both Friday and Saturday, November 20th and 21st at St. Joe's – 3269 Main St. in Buffalo, right next to UB South Campus.



Sharing the November 2015 Plate with Five Loaves Farm



In keeping with our mission to create a more just and compassionate world, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo shares our weekly collection plate with a local agency, living out our generosity in the Buffalo community. The November share-the-plate recipient is Five Loaves Farm. The mission of Five Loaves

Farm is to create sustainable market gardens that produce healthy foods along with educational and economic opportunities for residents of the upper West Side of Buffalo.

Spanning over 10 lots; 5 Loaves Farm plants gardens and constructs greenhouses to grow healthy foods. A NOFA (Northeast Organic Farming Association) NY Farmer's Pledge farm 5LF is committed to sustainable farming practices. 5LF works in conjunction with the Mayor's Summer Youth Internship Program, the Native American Magnet School, Tapestry Charter School and Jericho Road. High school students from Jericho Road can engage in weekly activities at the farm and a handful receive paid summer internships with the farm. They offer Community Supported Agriculture plots serving the refugee and low income community. 5LF also partners with Farmer Pirates who provide a compost pick up service for commercial and residential addresses saving landfill space and supporting sustainable agriculture.

5LF makes healthy foods available and affordable to neighbors by offering a CSA growing opportunity, growing for a school lunch program and accepting SNAP benefits. 5LF donates a portion of its produce to local soup kitchens. They also provide educational programs in growing as well as preparing fresh healthy food.

In the Share-the-Plate program, the church donates half the unrestricted donations made during each Sunday's offertory to a designated charity or organization identified by the Social Justice Task Force under policies formulated by the Board of Trustees. Recipients of the UUCB Share-the-Plate program must be either a 501(c)3 or 501(c)4 non-profit organization, and they must do work that is consistent with Unitarian Universalist principles. Any member of the congregation may nominate a recipient organization through the UUCB Social Justice Task Force.

Pledge payments may still be placed in the collection plate, either in a donation envelope or clearly marked "pledge" in the memo line. All undesignated cash goes to Share the Plate. If you wish to donate to Share the Plate by check, or with cash in an envelope, please note "Share the Plate" or just "Share" in the memo line or on the envelope. Envelopes are available from the ushers.

Ongoing efforts by the Social Justice Task force are the collection of non-perishable food donations for the Network of Religious Communities as well as recycling of old cell phones and printer cartridges. Donations can be left in the baskets at both entrances to the sanctuary. The next meeting of the Social Justice Task Force will be November 15th at 12:00 PM in the Church Library.

UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION NEWS

This Ministry Team has been working for two and an half years to make the church 's facility more accessible to people with and without disabilities. The workshop that UAIM recently sponsored pointed out some areas that we as a congregation need to make more accessible. First, people who came from the community for the workshop did not know where the Alliance Room was. So, we need to post in the Parish Hall Foyer and in the elevator where rooms are located. Secondly, several people who came used electric scooters. Members had to move a recycle bin out of the way so they could get through the Alliance Room door. Also, chairs in the Alliance Room had to be re-position, so people using assistive devices could maneuver in the Alliance Room.



Many times, people do not see barriers that people with disabilities face every day until they or someone they know become disabled in some way. A person at the workshop brought to the attention of the audience that when food is offered buffet style, we need to provide assistance to people with disabilities. Some people cannot stand in a line for a long time or they use walkers, canes, or other assistive devices. These folks may not be able to independently carry their own plates or cups. Also the buffet table needs to be out in the open not against a wall so people who use mobility devices can maneuver around the table.

Finally, the team would like you to keep your eyes open to barriers for individuals with or without disabilities who come into our sacred house. Please use the suggestions forms on the Welcome Table to inform us or talk to Beata Skoneski, Doug Sherman, Tony Keller, Lynn Mancuso, Ginny Vaughan or Steve Wixson.

Employment Opportunity Acting Director of Lifespan Faith Development Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo

Are you interested in a full-time position in a faith-based organization working with all ages? Are you interested in helping children, youth and adults as they explore spirituality and religion? Are you interested in developing your own skills in leadership, multigenerational/multicultural worship, and curriculum planning? Are you interested in being a participatory team member in shared ministry with a vibrant staff and growing congregation? Are you creative, organized, visionary, welcoming, thoughtful and caring? Then this might be the perfect position for you? Why not find out more? Job descriptions will be available on request. Please contact Rev. Joan Montagnes minister@buffalouu.org 716-885-2136

The UU Church of Buffalo Staff
695 Elmwood Ave
Buffalo, NY 14222
716-885-2136
www.buffalouu.org

Minister:

Rev Joan Montagnes
minister@buffalouu.org

Director of Lifespan Faith Development:

Sonja Jensen
lifespan@buffalouu.org

Music Director:

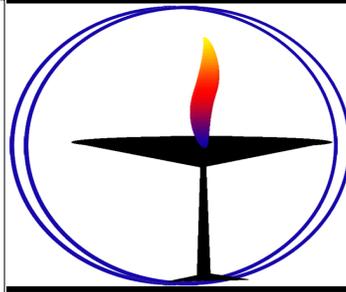
Daniel Bassin
music@buffalouu.org

Organist/Accompanist:

Su Lee
organist@buffalouu.org

Nursery Care Coordinator:

Barbara Bartz



Church Administrator:

Joshua Layton
office@buffalouu.org

Bookkeeper:

Donna Sentz
bookkeeper@buffalouu.org

Gatekeeper:

Sara Kirkland
office@buffalouu.org

Wedding Coordinator:

Paulette Notaro
weddings@buffalouu.org

Care Network:

Ginny Vaughan
716-768-1077
wixsonsg@gmail.com

Happening at the UUCB

Poinsettia & Wreath Sale

We have already had a few snow flurries, and I hope by the time you get your newsletter, we won't have a lot more. It's time for our wreath & poinsettia sale.

The wreaths are approximately 20" - 22" in diameter. They are trimmed with pinecones and bows, and they are freshly made to our order by Weeks' Nursery. Our wreaths cost less than most nurseries. The wreaths that are hung outside usually last most of the winter.

The poinsettias are in 6 1/2 inch pots and come in red, white, or pink. An order blank is included in this newsletter. All wreaths and poinsettias must be paid for when the order is turned in.

The wreaths & poinsettias will be delivered Sunday

December 6 in the Women's Lounge. The Orders will be taken in the Parish Hall during coffee hour on November 15, 22, and 29 or you can turn your order and money into the church office by December 1.

The proceeds will benefit the church. Questions? Call Nancy Thomas 885-8233



Leslie Zemsky to Speak at the Women's Society Program

On Thursday November 19 Leslie Zemsky, known as the official director of fun will speak on " Larkinville, Past, Present and Future." She has been charged with generating a slate of events and ideas to liven up the Larkinville area created by her husband Howard Zemsky and his Larkin Development Group. Her job at Larkin Square comes on top of plenty of non profit responsibilities, including board chair of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery. She also is active in Visit Buffalo Niagara and the Buffalo Arts and Technology Center.

We will begin at 11 sharp with appetizers, and beverages. Our speaker will start at 11:30 followed by a catered lunch at 12:30. The fee for the lunch is \$15. You can make a reservation at Josettepc50@gmail.com or in the Parish Hall on Sundays, November 8 and 15th. Payment can be made at that time or if you wish you can mail in your check. Make it payable to the U.U.C.B. and in the memo line be sure to write: Women's Society program. Checks mailed in MUST arrive by Friday November 11. Send it to the church office at 695 Elmwood Ave Bflo. 14222. If you make a reservation on the final Sunday before the event, then payment is due in person. Once the catering order is called in on the Monday preceding the event, no further reservations or payment can be accepted. The only exception being if you made a reservation on time, but wish to pay at the door, then the fee will be \$17. and NOT \$15. Attending only the talk portion of our program is free. Please give your

name at the check in table as you arrive at the garden entrance. This will greatly help us to give an accurate head count to our caterer.

Make your reservation for a delightful afternoon of fellowship, fun and interesting new information.

Food Pantry

Donations of canned fruit and vegetables will be accepted throughout the month of November. Place your food items in a bag and label it : Women's Society. Then place the bag in the red plastic storage bin housed in the church kitchen. On the day of the Women's Society program, the bin will be on a table by the appetizers.

Your generosity is appreciated.

