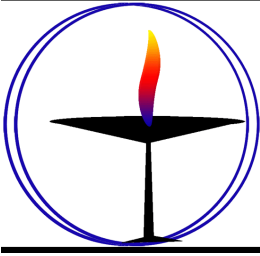


# The UU Church of Buffalo



*Gather – Inspire – Transform*

**December 2015 Newsletter**

695 Elmwood Ave ∪ Buffalo, NY 14222

716-885-2136 - [www.BuffaloUU.org](http://www.BuffaloUU.org)



## **Faith Matters: Get ready! Something Wonderful is Coming!**

This has been one of the mildest falls in Western New York history and yet, everyone is ready for the typical early snows and freezing weather that drop like soft-serve ice cream into the waffle cones of our lives. We have unpacked our parkas, got the snow tires on the car, and put the storms on the windows. Winter is coming. We know it. And we are prepared.

December is a good month for preparation. It is a good month to prepare for the long, cold weeks ahead; time to join the hibernators snug in their comfortable burrows; a season to go inward for reflection and leave outside days of sun-soaked summer frolicking far behind.

Then, just as we are thoroughly bundled up against the elements and getting ready to take on winter's worst, we greet the return of the sun. The days slowly grow longer. At the start of winter proper, remarkably, we prepare ourselves for the eventual coming of spring.

The traditional focus of December is Advent – the arrival of something wonderful. Not a bad time to cozy up by the fire with a cup of cocoa and ask yourself what wonderful thing you are preparing for. What new realization, attitude, or adventure will come to birth this year? Did you know that the words “Advent” and “Adventure” have the same root? Something to think about. In the meantime, be prepared! All kinds of festive events await you this month. Get out your calendars:

- Dec. 6, Advent Spiral service – a beautiful and reflective way to celebrate the winter solstice
- Dec. 13, No Rehearsal Christmas Pageant during the Sunday morning worship service. Don't forget to bring mittens, hats and scarves for the mitten tree. Holiday Cookie Sharing!
- Dec. 20, Music Sunday
- Dec. 24, 7:00pm, a family friendly Christmas Eve service chock full of lessons, carols and stories; and the kids will be in bed before midnight!
- Dec. 24, 11:00PM, the traditional Christmas Eve service because Christmas is all about tradition!

I look forward to celebrating a wonderful holiday season with you. Greenery, cookies, and candle-light. Ho! Ho! Ho!

Yours in faith and affection, Joan



## **Pulpit Previews**

### **Worship Theme: Preparation**



#### **December 6 “People Get Ready”**

**Rev. Joan Montagnes**

The world seems to be changing at a more rapid rate every day. Climate change, the digital age, the global market. Is your spirit ready for The Next Big Thing?

#### **December 13 “A Family Nativity”**

**Rev. Joan Montagnes and the Faith Development Ministry Team**

Our No Rehearsal Christmas Pageant. Everyone of every age is welcome to participate. Come as you are and join the story. Also, don't forget to bring new mittens, hats and scarves for the Mitten Tree! Rumor has it there will be a Festive Cookie Sharing after the service and Santa just might show up.

#### **December 20 “Music Sunday: Bach Christmas Oratorio, Part 2”**

**Daniel Bassin, the Choir, and Rev. Joan Montagnes**

Continuing on from last year's celebration of this seasonal masterpiece. Members of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra share their gifts of music with us.

#### **December 27 “Are We There Yet?”**

**Francis Montgomery**

Life's journeys take us on many different turns -- sometimes we are prepared -- sometimes we are not. We prepare for so many events -- And while preparing is important for the success of many things -- jobs, meals, trips, etc. , the greatest lessons in life which are often the hardest, very often come to us when we least expect it -- when we SEEM like we are unprepared. In our many preparations, are we ready for the outcomes --- when do we stop preparing and just travel the journey and allow our inner child to ask "Are we there yet?"



#### **Joys and Sorrows**

We celebrate with Tony Keller who is recovering wonderfully well from knee replacement surgery on October 19.

Kaitlyn Steinburg has had an exciting month. She is doing well after recovering from a hospital procedure. Her nephew, Alex has found housing after being homeless and is back in college. And she is going to be an aunt and godmother again.

#### **Holiday Office Closure**

The front office will be closed from December 25 to January 2. All staff will be taking time for family, rest and well-earned recuperation after a busy holiday schedule. The church will be open for a regular worship service and children's Faith Development classes on December 27.

# Preparation is Key

*Barbara Kloberdanz*

This seems to be the season of preparation as we all race around preparing for Christmas, Hanukah, Kwanza, whatever holiday. However, when I think about preparation, I find myself thinking about what the Board of Trustees needs as we prepare to do our best for this wonderful congregation.

A lot goes on behind the scenes in hopes that we get good results and fulfill our mission as we bring forth our ideas and our vision for an exciting future.

It is amazing to think that more keeps growing and happening around us. This past month among other things we had a stupendous installation of our minister Joan Montagnes and the congregation signed on to the Opportunity Pledge offered to us by the City of Buffalo. We have demonstrated our support for fostering, cultivating and preserving a culture of diversity, inclusion, fairness and equity in our city. Thank you to all of you who have signed on as individuals. We want this to be more than just our signatures on a piece of paper. Getting involved is who we are.

Our wonderful Choir under the leadership of Daniel Bassin participated in a terrific performance with Opera Sacra. I don't think many of us realize how much preparation that took. Thank you to them, not only for their work but for getting more recognition for UUCB as a great place to be.

Now, what's next.

The Board is preparing for our Annual Congregational Meeting. Save the date – January 31 after the service. As usual – there will be food. We will have a slate of proposed Board members to offer for your vote and there will be reports that will be available both online as well as on paper. It is important to all of us that you are truly aware of what we are doing and that you participate.

So – As we all prepare, please don't forget to reap the results. Good work, good food, good caring and compassion for one another in this season.



## December Schedule

December 6th: Ellie Johnson  
December 13th: Lawrence Congdon  
December 20th: Music Sunday  
December 27th: Women's Society



Happy Holidays from Pulpit Flowers! Thank you to all who have participated in our flower ministry during this past year, and if you have a "standing reservation" for 2016 please stop by our flower table or send us an email to be sure that we have reserved the correct date for you, Some Sundays are still available for the remainder of this program year and you may want to reserve one of them. If you would like more information, please stop by the flower table after Sunday service, email us at [pulpitflowers@buffalouu.org](mailto:pulpitflowers@buffalouu.org), or call us at 716-885-2136 ext.4. The cost is just \$35.00 and your desired text dedication will be included in our OSS.

## From the Director of Lifespan Faith Development

Hello, you fabulous UUCB members! I am so excited to be here through June as your Acting Faith Development Director. It's wonderful to be back in Western New York. I grew up in Rochester, frequently traveling to Niagara Falls to visit my grandparents, so the area is wonderfully familiar to me. This work is both my passion and my calling and it is truly a thrill for me to be here.

I began teaching religious education in my teen years in the Catholic parish where I attended elementary school. In college I moved on from Catholicism and found a passion for studying world religions. I graduated from Nazareth College in Rochester with a bachelor's degree in Art History and a concentration in Religious Studies.

When my oldest child was very small, she asked to attend Sunday school, and I knew that the UU church would be the first place we'd visit. We began attending First Unitarian Church of Rochester where I taught religious education for several grade levels and worked as the Infant/Toddler Care Coordinator.

When we moved to the capital region in 2010, we began attending the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany where I was a paid nursery caregiver, building host, and taught a variety of religious education classes. I also served on the Religious Education Council there.

In November of 2013, I began serving the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Saratoga Springs as Director of Religious Education. I fell in love with the work and the congregation. I feel so fortunate to have been part of such a warm, loving congregation, and I will always carry with me the many things I learned in running that program.

In addition to my passion for religious education, I enjoy needle felting, writing, running, and camping. I also have a background in Waldorf education and have been a long time Girl Scout leader. I have four children, ranging in age from 6 to 15, and we are home-schoolers. It all keeps me very busy!

I am eager to begin working within the solid and vibrant program that Sonja helped to foster. I can't wait to get to know all of you, though I do ask your patience as learning names does not always come quickly to me. Thank you so much for offering me the opportunity to serve your congregation!

Warmly,

Sarah Martin

**Blue Christmas Service**  
**7:00 PM, Tuesday, December 15**  
**Alliance Room**



### **Rev. Joan Montagnes and the Pastoral Care Ministry Team**

The Holiday Season is, for some, a season of great sadness. Memories of the past and today's pain can become overwhelming. For some, Thanksgiving or Christmas Day are the most difficult. For others, it's Christmas Eve, or New Year's Eve, or the beginning of another lonely New Year which pose the greatest challenge. Perhaps this is your first Christmas without a loved one. Perhaps you are estranged from family. Or maybe you are living in depression. And yet, throughout the Holidays you are often compelled to "put on a happy face" for others.

Come to the Blue Christmas Service: a time when we can, with others, acknowledge the "blue" feelings we have during the Holidays and seek comfort in caring fellowship.

You are welcome in all your pain, loneliness, and sadness. We pray that you will find hope and comfort in knowing that you are not alone.

## Sharing the December Plate with The Food Bank of Western New York



**Food Bank of WNY**  
Fighting Hunger One Day at a Time  
Serving Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie & Niagara Counties

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 July and August share-the-plate recipient is The Food Bank of Western New York. The mission of the Food Bank is to obtain nutritious food and support from public and private sources and efficiently distribute these resources to the hungry in Western New York through their member agencies.



Founded in 1978 The Food Bank of Western New York now serves approximately 100,000 people per year. 38 percent of those served are children while 8 percent are senior citizens. The Food Bank receives perishable and non-perishable food from manufacturers, retailers, brokers and distributors as well as from food drives. Cash donations are used to supplement these donations. The food is then distributed through 340 member agencies in Erie, Niagara, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua counties. These include food pantries, soup kitchens, summer camps, child care centers, group homes, senior centers and shelters. 95 percent of the Food Bank's resources go

directly to food acquisition and distribution programs. Every dollar donated to the food bank provides approximately six pounds of food or five meals. The Food Bank also has a community garden project consisting of 80 community gardens throughout Buffalo. The gardens are maintained by volunteers and provide fresh produce for Food Bank recipients.

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.

On going 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 December 15<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 in the Alliance Room

# UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY & Inclusion

“The Difficulty of Being Just: Including People with Disabilities in Congregational Life” is an article in the UUA website. The article begins with the Opening Words from the UUA Congregation Webpage.

“Our faith calls us to live a spirit of radical hospitality-only when we are truly open to the wealth of diversity In our world will the inherent worth and dignity of every person be affirmed with a large voice. Let’s not rest until all are welcomed into Beloved Community.”

This article gives some suggestions on how to be in a right relationship with members and friends in our church. I urge everyone to seek out this article, but some suggestions are as follows ( some of these suggestions we have already implemented.)



## Accessibility and Inclusion Recommendations for People with Visual, Auditory and Mobility Limitations

- Cut-out in pews for people who use mobility devices
- Power assisted doors
- Assisted Listening Devices
- Accessible Bathrooms
- Always use microphones (even if someone says they don't need one)
- Large print hymnals and orders of service
- Encourage speakers, worship associates, ect. To speak loudly & clearly
- Raise the pulpit so everyone can see
- Wear name tags all the time for people with memory problems
- Leaves seats on the aisles for people who have difficulty moving into the aisles.

And speaking of Seats: It is not okay to force people who use mobility devices to sit in front of all the pews or behind all the pews because there is no other seating option. Segregated seating is not an acceptable seating arrangement.

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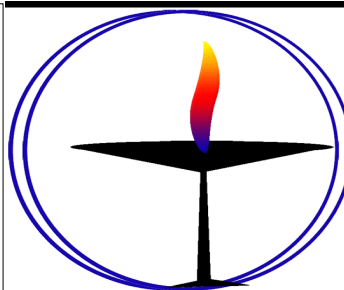
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## Happening at the UUCB

### PLAY ON!

### SHAKESPEARE AND MUSIC

Few would dispute the notion that the plays of William Shakespeare are the most influential literary works of Western culture. The fascination with the Bard of Stratford-on-Avon is equally strong in the world of music. In this class, we'll look at how Shakespeare used music in his plays, and how composers have been inspired by these great comedies and tragedies ever since they first appeared. We'll hear a fantastic range of Shakespeare-influenced repertoire ~ songs, overtures, tone poems, operas, ballets, even some music from the soundstages of Hollywood. From Beethoven and Mendelssohn to Verdi and Prokofiev to Rodgers and Cole Porter, the

Shakespearean reach over the last four centuries of music-lovers has been immense. Come join us as we "mark the music"! 13 weeks starting on January 6



## HOLIDAY PROGRAM

The Women's Society's Holiday Program will be held on Thursday December 17.

Michele Costa will delight us with her performance with puppetry. The story will be, "Star Mother's Youngest Child, A Celebration of the Human Spirit of Friendship and Sharing."

As a special treat for everyone, we will have a raffle of a lovely holiday basket filled with gourmet goodies and useful gifts.

We will begin at 11 with appetizers and beverages. The performance will begin at 11:30 and lunch will be served at 12:30. The fee for the lunch is \$15. You can make a reservation at

[Josettepc50@gmail.com](mailto:Josettepc50@gmail.com) or in the Parish Hall on Sundays December 6 and 13. Payment is appreciated at that time or you can mail in your check. Make it payable to the UUCB and in the memo line write: Women's Society. Checks MUST be received in the church office by December 11. If you make a reservation on the final Sunday before the event, then payment will be due at that time. Once the catering order is called in on the Monday morning preceding the event, no further reservations or payment can be accepted. Attending the performance only is free. When you arrive please give your name at the check in and welcome table located as you enter the Parish Hall from the garden entrance.

Let's gather in friendship and fellowship during this special time of year.

## FOOD PANTRY

Throughout the month of December we are asking for donations of hot and or cold cereals. The red storage bin where items should be placed will be on a table during the Women's Society Program. Other times, the bin is housed in the church kitchen. Place items in a bag and label it Women's Society. Please be generous during this time of giving.



## Covenant Program Pot Luck

Covenant Group Member? Considering joining a group? Just curious?

**Sunday, January 24** will be Covenant Program Day at UUCB!

Experience the morning service, presented by Covenant group facilitators and members. Then come back for the **Covenant program potluck** from **5:00-8:00 PM** to enjoy some food and fellowship, learn about covenant groups...and maybe even consider signing up to join a group.

During dinner, you can meet members and friends of UUCB, including the trained Covenant group facilitators. After dinner, we will experience a Covenant group session together. All members and friends of UUCB are welcome. Just bring a dish or beverage to share, and bring the family. Children are welcome during dinner. If requested in advance, child care will be available during the after-dinner program.

If the experience inspires you to learn more through participation in a group, we will help you choose a group that fits your schedule. Even if you are not sure that this is the right time for you to commit to a Covenant group, you will have a great meal and good company as you learn more about this Small Group Ministry.

To find out about this event, to RSVP, request child care, or to find out more about Covenant Groups in general, email [covenantgroups@buffalouu](mailto:covenantgroups@buffalouu), or stop at the Welcome Table in the Parish Hall.

