

# The Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo



DECEMBER 2019 NEWSLETTER

Gather ~ Inspire ~ Transform

695 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14222  
Phone: 716-885-2136  
Website: [www.buffalouu.org](http://www.buffalouu.org)



## MINISTER'S COLUMN: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE PEOPLE OF AWE?



So much goes unnoticed. We are distracted in every way, especially during the holiday season – and yet everyday miracles surround us.

Think of those things we lift up during December. Do they not, when held in isolation, inspire awe?

A distant yet spectacular star shining in the night sky. A candle flame burning. A tree that remains green during the harshest winter. Delicate and unique crystals of snow. The birth of a child. Voices raised together in familiar song. The earth tilting on its axis once again to offer the promise of spring. And despite everything and all the evidence to the contrary, the human capacity to hope, to rejoice, and to reassure one another with messages of goodwill.



All of these are holy, sacred moments of December, incidents worthy of notice, phenomena that can, should we let them, fill us with awe.

We could spend December stunned, standing in the winter night, attending to nothing but the miracles around us, paralyzed by wonder.

But then the children would not be fed, and the dog not walked, and the laundry not done, and emails would not be answered, and... and... and...

Clearly, living every moment in awe is not a way to survive; but maybe being a People of Awe is a different sort of thing.

Maybe, being a People of Awe, we simply promise one another to take the time, on occasion, to notice the wonder of the world. Maybe, being a People of Awe, means supporting each other in that promise to, on occasion, notice the miracles all around us. Just notice. And in the noticing, each in our separate ways, and together, we fall in awe of the universe again.

I wish you all a very happy and safe holiday season. Love one another. And if family gets to be too much, or the requisite traditions are too demanding, or the gift giving becomes more about consuming than love. Take a break. Breathe. And notice something, anything, and let it fill you with awe. Breathe again and then re-enter the world with love.

Yours in faith and affection, *Rev. Joan*

## PULPIT PREVIEWS



### **Dec 1: Reaching for Peace, Rev. Joan Montagnes**

World peace may seem like an unattainable goal, so let's start small. Begin with finding peace with our selves, peace in our families, peace in our neighborhoods. It all begins with forgiveness.

### **Dec 4, 7pm: Blue Christmas, Rev. Joan Montagnes**

Holidays are traditionally a time of family, laughter and joy. For those of us who are grieving, have a seriously ill loved one, or are just "blue," the holidays can be a time of painfully mixed emotions and challenge. Come for a gentle service of care and comfort. You are not alone.

### **Dec 8: Sacred and Difficult, Rev. Joan Montagnes**

We all have true stories of pain. These stories are difficult to tell and difficult to hear. But pain and progress live in the same house, so we need to find the trust to let the stories breathe and heal.

### **Dec 15: The Sacred Between Us, Rev. Joan Montagnes**

Interfaith groups have a difficult challenge. They want to join in justice-making, but to do that they need to understand each other. Assumptions are made. Insults are thrown. Disrespect arises. Creating a gracious space for dialogue is perhaps our greatest challenge of all.

### **Dec 22: The Winter Solstice, Sarah Martin**

A multigenerational celebration of the return of the light!

### **Dec 24, 7pm: A Mulling of Lessons and Carols, Rev. Joan Montagnes**

A traditional service of lessons and carols for the whole family. Celebrate with readings, music, candles and stories.

### **Dec 24, 11pm: A Ceremony of Carols, Daniel Bassin and Rev. Joan Montagnes**

Our annual candlelit Christmas Eve service features your UUCB Choir in an Awe-inspiring hour of worship that features the very best of a traditional Lessons and Carols service. This year, we are excited to feature Benjamin Britten's beloved holiday masterpiece, A Ceremony of Carols.

### **29-Dec: Awe of the gods, Julie Taylor**

There is this statement of comfort that says that god doesn't give you more than you can handle. Yet this statement provides little comfort when the universe decides to exercise great power over our small existence. The insignificance we feel can be awful and awe-full at the same time. Our small existence can lead to our small choices on how we proceed with facing the overwhelming power of the universe.



## JOYS and SORROWS



We share our joy with the Harris Family. On November 10, Robin and Ed renewed their marriage vows. During the same ceremony we dedicated ourselves to the spiritual life of their baby daughter, Harper Lulu.

Our deepest sympathies are with the family of Geneva Arrington. Geneva passed away peacefully on October 24. Funeral services are to be held at a later date.

We also hold in our hearts Ashley Mountcastle and her family. Ashley's brother, Aaron James Nathaniel, died suddenly and unexpectedly at the age of 44.

We send healing thoughts to Charlene Montgomery's brother, Lonnie Anna, who is hospitalized with heart problems.

We are happy to welcome David Drost as our New Administrator for Facilities and Communications. That means he coordinates all our space reservations and rentals, small repairs, the website, newsletter, orders of service, and eblast. He is our Gatekeeper, Sara Kirkland's direct supervisor – so rather than giving Sara requests, please give them to David and he will work with Sara and ensure your needs are addressed. On top of all of that, he sends out some random mailings from the Board and fields all general office communications and incoming calls. David does all this in a half-time position.



That is a lot of work! Good thing many volunteers and staff are working with David to make sure our building is clean, functioning, not double-booked, and you know what is going on when. Special thanks to Karen Streech who manages the website and the newsletter.

Please introduce yourself to David. Tell him about your ministry at the congregation. He is slowly getting to know us and how we run the church. His usual working hours are Mon.-Fri. 10am-2pm

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS



### Sarah Martin, Director of Religious Education

December is our month of "Awe" and we have so many great things coming up in the Religious Education program.

#### **December 1 – Advent Spiral**

Join us in the Parish Hall at 6 pm on Sunday, December 1, for this beautiful, contemplative ritual. We'll celebrate the season and our anticipation of the Christmas season. This year we are hosting only one spiral. All are welcome.

#### **December 13 – Game Night**

Family Game Night is back! Join us from 6-8 pm in the Alliance Room on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> for pizza and games. Bring your favorite board or card game or try someone else's.

*Continued ...*

### **December 20 – Santa Claus Potluck**

On Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, we'll gather in the Parish Hall at 6 pm to share a meal, sing some carols, and have a visit from Santa! Bring a dish to share (please clearly label common allergens).

### **December 22 – Solstice Service**

Our multigenerational Winter Solstice service will be Sunday, December 22. The nursery will be open as usual, but all children and youth in PreK and up are invited to join us in the sanctuary for a celebration of the return of the light after the longest night of the year.

### **December 31 – New Year's Eve Early Countdown**

Join us in the Parish Hall from 4-6 pm on Tuesday, December 31 for a potluck meal, fun games, and an early countdown to the New Year with a ball drop! Bring a dish to pass (please clearly label common allergens.)

## **Adult Faith Development**

### **TUESDAY NIGHT MEMOIR GROUP**

Our Tuesday Night Memoir Group is looking for a few new members. Do you have a story to tell? Have you given any thought to putting your memories down on paper? We have just the group for you. This session of our memoir group meets Tuesday evenings twice a month from 7-8:30 pm at the church. Email [lifespan@buffalouu.org](mailto:lifespan@buffalouu.org) for details. Tuesday Night Memoir Group will resume meeting after the first of the year.

### **HOT DOCS! WRITINGS THAT HAVE MADE HISTORY**

**Michael Harris, Instructor**

This course examines some of these key formative documents that, for better or worse, have changed our country and the world at large.

#### **Week-by-Week Syllabus for remaining classes:**

Session Twelve (December 4): Civil Rights (and Wrongs) -- Key Decisions of the Supreme Court

Session Thirteen (December 11): Franklin Delano Roosevelt/Winston Churchill -- The Art of the Speech

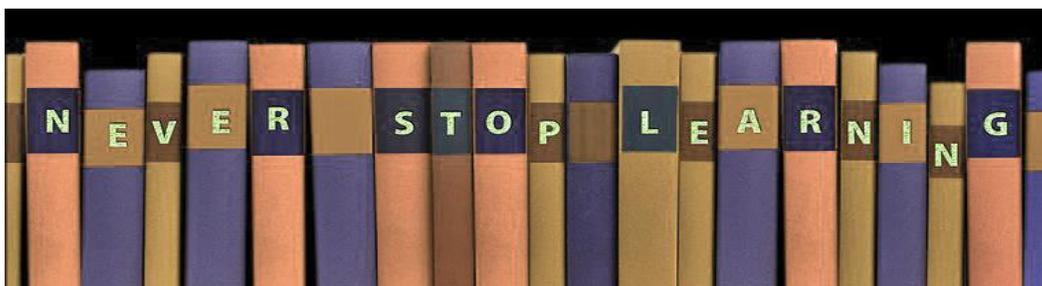
Session Fourteen (December 18): Our Living Document -- The Bill of Rights and Other Constitutional Amendments

**Wednesdays: 9:30-11:30 a.m. \$10 per session**

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo; Alliance Room on 2nd Floor**

**695 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14222.**

**For more information, call Church Office at 885-2136, or email [office@buffalouu.org](mailto:office@buffalouu.org)**





### Daniel Bassin, Music Director

This December, we are called to ask the question: What does it mean to be people of Awe? As this month approaches each year, we eagerly anticipate Sundays filled with festive, moving music that is alternatively treasured and new. With this year's special Thanksgiving Music Sunday behind us, your UUCB Choir is looking forward to a month of dynamic service music, culminating in our beloved, candlelit Christmas Eve service. In moving our customary December Music Sunday to the last weekend of November, we were also given the time to plan an extra-special treat for this year's Christmas Eve – we are building our service around a true gem of the seasonal choral repertoire, Benjamin Britten's Ceremony of Carols.

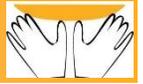
The month begins with Rev. Montagnes's service, Reaching for Peace, on December 1. Service music will include an instrumental rendition of Horace Silver's classic jazz ballad, Peace, and will feature Soprano soloist, Jessie Downs, in Francis Poulenc's Priez pour paix ("Pray for Peace"). Jessie will also join forces with soloist, Michael Harris, in a Brecht/Eisler composition, Peace Song. Finally, Jonathan Vogtle will conclude our service with a piano rendition of Clif Hardin's contemporary chorale, May Love Be Your Guide.

On December 8th, we'll have our choral, solo vocal, and instrumental forces on display for Sacred and Difficult. The UUCB sanctuary harpsichord will be featured in selections from a work that truly inhabits the service's title, J.S. Bach's Musical Offering. Soloist, Helen Lowry, will perform the concluding aria from Purcell's Dido and Aeneas, and your UUCB Choir will tackle contemporary English composer's masterful Blake setting, The Lamb. December 15th marks an interfaith service of musical reflections, with a "Dravidian Dithyramb" for chorus by Victor Paranjoti sung alongside Armenian-American composer, Alan Hovhanness' psalm setting, Out of the Depths. This service, The Sacred Between Us, will also feature Tenor Soloist, Matthew Spaulding, in Ravel's voice-and-piano setting of the Jewish prayer for the dead, Kaddish.

Director of Religious Education, Sarah Martin, leads a Winter Solstice service on December 22nd, and your choir will offer up two contrasting seasonal anthems: Velvet Shoes by Ethan McGrath (a choral work originally commissioned by our Choir and Minister of Music, Barbara Wagner) and Ocho Kandelikas, a contemporary Ladino song celebrating Hanukkah. Christmas Eve includes two different services: a 7pm service led by Rev. Montagnes and Sarah Martin, which will feature congregational caroling, and musical accompaniment by our in-house brass-and-keys duo; then our 11pm service is our annual candle lit Choir service. Finally, we finish up the month and year with Julie Taylor's service, Awe of the gods, featuring art songs drawn from the romantic tradition, and even one by your music director...



## SHARE THE PLATE



### DECEMBER Share the Plate: the [SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence](#)

Karen Klimczak was a Sister of St. Joseph from Buffalo, New York. Her many ministries included visiting prisoners and helping them to deal more positively with conflict and violence, finding a home for their families while they were visiting their loved ones in prison, providing transitional housing for recently released inmates, and bringing youth together with parolees to hear their stories. Sister Karen led prayer vigils at murder sites throughout Buffalo to comfort the victims' families and friends, and as a witness to the community of peace and nonviolence. She celebrated Christmas with an annual party for the children and siblings of homicide victims. Sister Karen was “Bounce” the clown who brought God’s love and laughter to all ages.

After her tragic murder on Good Friday 2006 at the hands of one of the parolees she was trying to help, the outpouring of grief and hopelessness in the Buffalo community gave way to a sense of urgency and a call to keep alive Sister Karen’s vision of a world without violence. Opened in February of 2007 at 80 Durham Avenue in Buffalo, the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence offers opportunities for people to learn and practice nonviolence through training in the Alternatives to Violence Project in prison and in the community, Camp Peaceprints for youth in the summer, educational outreach, activism, and special events. We strive to build positive relationships with community groups working for peace in our city and beyond, particularly groups helping at-risk youth on the streets of Buffalo. The Center was instrumental in the development of the Buffalo Peacemakers Gang Intervention and Outreach Program.

To carry on Sister Karen's vision of a world without violence, the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence is committed to eliminating violence in ourselves, in our society, and in our world. We work to create a nonviolent community in our thinking, our acting, and our relationships.

The SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence is a ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph and Associates of Buffalo.

Donations: During the month of December we will be collecting the following items for the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence to help with their prison workshops and Camp Peace Prints: ground coffee, 5 pound bags of sugar, tea, powdered creamer, cookies (hermetically sealed, not with the pull back sticky opening), construction paper, stickers, glitter glue, feathers, pom-poms, etc.





Sharon Walker, [uucb.wny.specevents@gmail.com](mailto:uucb.wny.specevents@gmail.com)

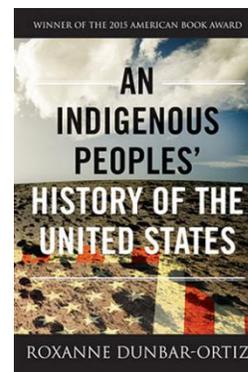
## Denominational News



### [An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States](#)

by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

Acclaimed historian and activist Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz offers a history of the United States told from the perspective of Indigenous peoples and reveals how Native Americans, for centuries, actively resisted expansion of the US empire. Dunbar-Ortiz adroitly challenges the founding myth of the United States and shows how policy against the Indigenous peoples was colonialist and designed to seize the territories of the original inhabitants, displacing or eliminating them. Spanning more than four hundred years, this classic bottom-up peoples' history radically reframes US history and explodes the silences that have haunted our national narrative.



## **Early Registration Open!**

Adult full-time registration is \$400 through March 15.

**NEW! Registration Payment Plan:** With a \$50 down-payment, the cost of registration can be paid over the course several months. Final payment must be received by February 29, 2020. When the final registration is complete, special consideration for dormitory lodging bundles, [financial aid](#) and [volunteer opportunities](#) will become available.

See <https://www.uua.org/ga> for more info.

## **UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

## WNY Interfaith News



**VOICE Buffalo our interfaith social justice partner**

Join the UUCB/VOICE Buffalo Peace Hub; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month; 6:00pm Registration and Refreshments, 6:30-8:30 Circle, 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl., Alliance Rm.

Our organizations have teamed up to offer Peace Circles with the goal of UUCB becoming a Community Peace Hub site. Our focus is to ensure restorative practice are indeed being implemented and followed in our public schools and supporting our congregation's commitment to social and restorative justice change in Buffalo. For more information email Sharon Walker at [uucb.wny.specevents@gmail.com](mailto:uucb.wny.specevents@gmail.com).

## JUSTICE MINISTRY (formerly SASE)



The team we used to call SASE, Social Action Sunday Events is now the Justice Ministry. The name Justice Ministry better reflects our mission and the fact that events on Sunday are only one component of our ministry. Our goal is to raise awareness in the congregation of issues and actions related to becoming a more Just community, rooted in Buffalo. We work to identify our Share the Plate recipient for each month, and to identify impactful activities for the congregation to participate in. We might invite you to show up to boost a cause, we might ask you to write a postcard in coordination with our Share the Plate recipient to support their work - either to ask for change or to thank someone for their good work, or we might invite you into community building for the greater good of the community. Please look for activities you can become involved in to make our community a more Just and Loving place for everyone.

Our team members are Liz Parke, Sharon Walker, Denise DePietro, Karen Jarvis, Hy Carrel, Steve Wixson, Religious Education director Sarah Martin and our chair Rev. Joan. New members with a passion for justice are always welcome, we meet every second Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM.

## UAIM – ACCESSABILITY and INCLUSION MINISTRY NEWS



On the weekend of November 9 and 10 UAIM had the pleasure of hosting the singer/songwriter and disability advocate Gaelynn Lea in the Sanctuary. She performed on Saturday night and spoke at Service on Sunday.

As a result of her disability, Gaelynn uses an electric wheelchair. In preparation we needed to get a ramp to allow Gaelynn to speak from the Chancel. Ed Harris had a ramp he was willing to donate to the Church to allow the Pulpit area to be temporarily accessible. Once we knew we had a ramp we had to move the disassembled ramp from Ed's garage to the Church. This involved a rented truck and the labor of Ed Harris, Alex Mead, Tony Keller, Steve Wixson and, Tom Muka. We loaded and subsequently unloaded all the pieces and carried them into the Sanctuary. We then assembled the ramp, making sure that it was properly installed. The whole operation took about four hours from our initial loading to completely installing the temporary ramp. The ramp was disassembled and stored within the Church, another labor-intensive procedure.

Again, we want to thank Ed, Alex, Tony, Steve, and Tom for their efforts and providing their labors to make the ramp appear. Thanks to Tony, Steve, and Tom for making it disappear and for its storage.

The UAIM team felt extremely pleased that we could provide access to the Chancel where worship is conducted. We need to find ways to welcome those whose voice we need to hear and whose disability prevents them from walking up our few stairs. Providing a ramp did the trick.

## PULPIT FLOWER MINISTRY



Happy Holidays from Pulpit Flowers! This ministry has been a wonderful part of our Sunday services for many years, and a good way for us to pay tribute to a special person, special occasion, a special time, special cause, gratitude, etc. Please consider sponsoring flowers for one of our Sunday services in the 2020 calendar year. The donation for the flowers is only \$35.00 and you may choose your personalized text dedication for the weekly eblast and the Order of Sunday Service. After the service, we encourage you to take the flowers home with you to enjoy with friends and family, or you may choose to donate them. **The next available flower dates are January 19, March 15 and March 29, 2020.**

Please see us at the flower table after most Sunday services, call us at 716-885-2136, ext.4, or email us at [pulpitflowers@buffalouu.org](mailto:pulpitflowers@buffalouu.org) for more information, and if you have a "standing" reservation for flowers in 2020, please be sure to remind us of your chosen date.

### December Flower Schedule:

December 1                      Michael Shanahan  
December 8-29                 The Women's Society of UUCB

## UUCB ANNOUNCEMENTS, MEETINGS & EVENTS



### STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

Thank you everyone who has made a pledge of financial commitment to the 2020 church year. We have almost achieved our budget goal!



Your generosity is a form of care for our community. Giving from the heart furthers our individual and collective spiritual journeys. Your gifts support all our flourishing ministries of religious education, pastoral care, social justice, music, covenant groups and worship.

Thank you for bringing greater wealth to our congregation not only with your gifts of passion, energy and thought, but also with your gifts of funds. All that you are and all that you contribute to our gathering enriches and ennobles the whole and give us all more power to care for each other and the world.

If you have not yet made a pledge of financial commitment to support the 2020 church year budget, we invite you to send your pledge card to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo, 695 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14222. If you have questions about your pledge, please contact Rev. Joan Montagnes at 716-885-2136 or [minister@buffalouu.org](mailto:minister@buffalouu.org).

### WOMENS SOCIETY NEWS



On Thursday, December 12 at 11:30 a.m., the UUCB Women's Society presents musicians from Buffalo's storied COLORED MUSICIAN'S CLUB, fronted by singer MELISSA KATE. They will perform seasonal jazz favorites, emceed by band leader and jazz historian, GEORGE SCOTT. This is a performance not to be missed!

*Continued ...*

Doors open at 11 a.m. Refreshments will be available (\$3). Performance at 11:30. Pre-paid luncheon at 12:30. Cost of the performance alone (no lunch) is \$5 at the door. No reservations necessary. No charge for Women's Soc. members.

Pre-pay for luncheon after the service in the Parish Hall on Dec. 1 or Dec. 8. Wmn's Soc. Members - \$15; non-members - \$20.

Or, pre-pay by mail by sending your check made out to UUCB and mailing it to: Church Office, Unitarian-Universalist Church of Buffalo, [695 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14222](http://695ElmwoodAve.com).

**Important: write Wms. Soc. Lunch on the check's memo line.**

**YOUR CHECK MUST BE IN THE CHURCH OFFICE BY NOON ON FRIDAY, DEC. 6.**

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## **PICK UP YOUR WREATHS AND POINSETTIAS!**



**Our pickup date is Sunday December 8, 2019.**

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## **UUCB BOOK GROUP MEETING**

No meeting in December. Jan. 27 - KILLERS OF THE FLOWER MOON by David Grann.

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## **WIDOWS and WIDOWERS CIRCLE**

A monthly gathering of Women and Men who have lost their partners



Our Widow and Widowers Circle meets the first Sunday of every month at noon in the Marge Gardner Room.

All widows and Widowers are invited. We use the time to share our grieving process and help each other adjust to the transition. You may bring a lunch and/or a friend.

For more information contact Bonnie Collins via email at [collinsb@buffalo.edu](mailto:collinsb@buffalo.edu) or by phone and/or text at 716-867-9628.

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**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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<b>Minister:</b> Rev. Joan Montagnes <a href="mailto:minister@buffalouu.org">minister@buffalouu.org</a>	<b>Administrator of Facilities and Communication:</b> David Drost <a href="mailto:office@buffalouu.org">office@buffalouu.org</a>	<b>Director of Religious Education:</b> Sarah Martin <a href="mailto:lifespan@buffalouu.org">lifespan@buffalouu.org</a>	<b>Music Director:</b> Daniel Bassin <a href="mailto:music@buffalouu.org">music@buffalouu.org</a>
<b>Care Network:</b> Ginny Vaughan 716-768-1077 <a href="mailto:wixsonsg@gmail.com">wixsonsg@gmail.com</a>	<b>Gatekeeper:</b> Sara Kirkland <a href="mailto:office@buffalouu.org">office@buffalouu.org</a>	<b>Wedding Coordinator:</b> Helen Lowry <a href="mailto:weddings@buffalouu.org">weddings@buffalouu.org</a>	<b>Organist/Accompanist:</b> Jonathan Vogtle
<b>Administrator for Finance:</b> Donna Sentz <a href="mailto:donnasentz@buffalouu.org">donnasentz@buffalouu.org</a>	<b>Nursery Care Coordinator:</b> Morgan Silver	<b>Newsletter</b> (submissions due by the 15th) <a href="mailto:newsletter@buffalouu.org">newsletter@buffalouu.org</a> <b>Weekly Announcements</b> (submissions due by NOON Wednesday) <a href="mailto:announcements@buffalouu.org">announcements@buffalouu.org</a>	



**A chalice alit since 1831**  
**A sanctuary on the National Registry of Historic Places**

