



Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo

DECEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

Gather - Inspire - Transform



What does it mean to be a People Open to Joy?



This has been a difficult year, a difficult two years. And now the holidays are upon us and we are expected to be merry and bright. We are expected to be jolly and joyful.

That's a tall order if you're feeling even a little worn down and grinchy. It's a lot to ask while we are in a pandemic which seems to have no end; when there's a new level of fear in just being close to someone; when we have lost so many; when social discord has hit an all-time high; and climate change is raging. Ho, ho, ho...

The Holiday season may be especially painful if you are separated from loved ones for any reason – distance, covid, estrangement, or death.

And so, in December our congregation offers three rituals to acknowledge the challenge of opening ourselves to joy. Three rituals which may crack open our hearts to let the holidays in.

First, we will hold our Blue Christmas Service. The Holiday Season is, for some, a season of great sadness. The Blue Christmas Service is a time of candlelight and sharing. In a safe space we 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.



Our second Holiday Ritual is the Mitten Tree Service. Every year, in the early part of December, our congregation decorates our Holiday Tree with new winter hats, mitts, scarves, and socks. It's a ritual. We don't just throw our gifts onto the tree higgledy-piggledy. First, we gather. Then we tell a story.

Once upon a time there was an unhappy, grouchy woman who had a change of heart when she saw a child in need. Something inside her was transformed and unleashed a wellspring of generosity. She gave something of herself away, and in so doing opened her heart to unexpected joy.

Only after we have gathered together as a beloved community, only after we have lit the chalice, and only after we have told the story of the Mitten Tree, can we offer our gifts of generosity. Only then, through the ritual of giving as a community, does our sanctuary fill with joy.

The third Holiday ritual which opens us to joy is our Christmas Eve Services. On Christmas Eve we hold two services of music, readings and candlelight to welcome the rebirth of hope and love. Again, this is a ritual. We don't just say “Happy Birthday, Jesus,” and leave it at that – as if a simple statement alone could mark the turning of the earth and the fulfill the need for miracles in the middle of winter. No, we do the ritual. We sing old songs, hear the old words,



we light candles in the darkness, and we prepare our hearts to open to a new joy.

Three rituals to open our hearts so we can bring joy to our broken and hurting world.

Blue Christmas: Wednesday December 8, 7pm in the Alliance Room

Mitten Tree Service: Sunday, December 12, 10:30 am. All new, warm mittens, hats, scarves and socks will be donated to the clients of Journey's End Refugee Services. We are also collecting gift cards to Tops, Target, and Save a Lot.

Christmas Eve Services: Friday, December 24, 7pm and 11pm

You are welcome to each and all. Let us open our hearts to joy!

Joys and Sorrows

We send deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Carol Condon. Carol, a long-time member of the congregation passed away on October 31. We held a celebration of her life on Nov. 13.

Our thoughts are with the family and friends of Georgia Pooley. We held a memorial service for Georgia, long-time friend and member of the congregation, mother of Gigi Helliwell, on Nov. 6.

Our condolences go to Kathy Kubala. Kathy's sister, Kandy, passed away last November. We were not able to hold her memorial service until November 16 of this year.

We rejoice with Shaun Doyle and Eric Leonberger who brought their son, Francis Grayson Leonberger-Doyle to our congregation to be Dedicated on October 24. Big brother, Jackson, was shy but beaming with joy at the event.

We are currently holding in-person services at the church. For those who wish to live-stream our church services from home, click our [YouTube](http://live.buffalouu.org) link at <http://live.buffalouu.org>. It can also be found by searching for "Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo" in the YouTube search box.

Pulpit Previews

Dec 5: People Get Ready, Rev. Joan Montagnes

An advent service to welcome Hope, Joy, Love and Peace into our lives.

Dec 8, 7pm: Blue Christmas, Rev. Joan Montagnes

The Holiday Season is, for some, a season of great sadness. 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.

Dec 12: Choosing Joy, Rev. Joan Montagnes

It's the Mitten Tree Service! Bring new, warm, mitts, hats, scarves, socks for the clients of Journey's End Refugee Services. We are also collecting gift cards for Target, Save a Lot, and Tops. Nothing like a little generosity to spark joy in the soul.

Dec 19: All Wrapped Up, Charlene Montgomery

Holidays are a time of gift giving. Thinking about why we give a gift is as important for the giver as the receiver. What is really "wrapped up" with the gift we give -- How did giving gifts get started? There are so many kinds of gifts. You have the ability to give a gift every day of the year – let's be happy givers and joyous receivers.

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

A Christmas Eve service of readings and carols for the whole family.

Dec 24, 11pm: A Mystical Christmas Eve, Dr. Jessie Downs and Rev. Joan Montagnes

Join the UUCB Choir for a contemplative musical service that aims to evoke the wonder and mystery of the Christmas story. Attendees will hear expected favorites by Benjamin Britten, Gustav Holst, and Randall Thompson; two settings of the "O Magnum Mysterium" by Francis Poulenc and Luis de Victoria; and a piece that is new to the ensemble - "The Hymn of the Cherubim" by P.I. Tchaikovsky.

Dec 26: After the Angels, Rev. Fran Manly

Howard Thurman reminds us that when the song of the angels is stilled and the brouhaha in Bethlehem is over and done, then the work of Christmas begins. On this day after Christmas, let's think about what that work might be.

Rev. Joan is Going on Sabbatical

Rev. Joan will be on sabbatical leave from January 2 – February 28. This will be a time for re-grounding, re-balancing, and re-viving. Rev. Lynn Acquafondata and our Lay Pastoral Ministers, John Marohn, Lynn Mancuso, Karen Jarvis and Bonnie Collins, will be on call for all pastoral needs. The Worship Associates, Fran Manly, Tracey Kassman, Bobby Withrow, Charlene Montgomery, Julie Taylor, Shaun Doyle and Eve Holberg will be coordinating Sunday Services. The church staff and the Board of Trustees will know how to contact Rev. Joan in case of emergency. Rev. Joan will return on March 1 full of vim and vigor and with a renewed vision of her ministry with our congregation.





Religious Education & Faith Development News

Greetings from the Religious Education Ministry!

For the month of December, we've planned some fun events. Of course, we will be keeping an eye on the positivity rates and act accordingly. If you are interested in helping or attending any event, please contact Lisa at: lpeterangelo@buffalouu.org



On December 10: We will be installing the Peace Cranes in the Parish Hall. Please contact Lisa if you are interested in helping.

Crane made by Leslie Nickerson RE Workshop Volunteer.



On December 11th we will be hosting a Dungeons and Dragons workshop for those who would like to learn how to facilitate D&D campaigns with students using Unitarian Universalists themes. Our facilitator is Rev. Craig Schwalenburg, "Your Game Minister". The workshop will be on Zoom and will start at 10:00am and end at 3:00 PM with a lunch break. **We have three more slots available.** Those who take the workshop will be committing to leading an occasional campaign with students during the holidays, Spring breaks, or summer parties. I'm asking for these newly trained people to come to the December 18th D&D party as well.

On December 18th - We will be hosting a Dungeons & Dragons Holiday party. For now, we are planning it for an in-person event but if the need arises, we will take it to Zoom. More information to follow.

On December 19th - We will be handing out Holiday treat bags to all Religious Education Children and Youth after the Sunday service. Please stop by to pick up the bags.

The Religious Education Ministry Team would like to wish our families and children the safest, and loveliest of Holidays. We look forward to in-person programming in the new year and to accomplish this, we need more teachers. Since we are bringing children back in-person we need to maintain safe classroom ratios, so a few additional adults are necessary. If you would like to assist us in bringing back RE, please contact Lisa and ask how you can help.



The work of Christmas
by Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.

RETHINK CHURCH

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).





Music Notes

Dr. Jessie Downs, Acting Music Director

The UUCB music ministry will be lighting up the holidays this December with a variety of musical events – from caroling on Bidwell, to a mini “Music Sunday,” and a very special Candlelight Christmas Eve. Our new soloists Liam and Taryn will also be offering some special solo music on select Sundays, alongside the always fabulous Jonathan Vogtle, and a handful of guest musicians.

A small group of choir members will kick off the holiday season by caroling at the tree lighting ceremony on Bidwell Parkway, Tuesday December 7th 5-7pm. We aren’t yet sure what time we will be “on,” but the event is sure to be a fun one. More information about our performance will be forthcoming.

On Sunday December 12th, we will welcome four special guest instrumentalists into our sanctuary for a mini “Music Sunday.” The main offering will be a presentation of George Frideric Handel’s Christmas classic “Oh Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion” from The Messiah. Leslie Boldt will be our volunteer alto soloist for this special piece, joined by Megan Kyle on oboe, Evan Courtin on violin, Leanne Darling on viola, Katie Weissman on cello, Jonathan Vogtle on harpsichord, and the UUCB Choir. Alto soloist Helen Lowry will also present a piece for voice and oboe by Ralph Vaughan Williams, and the guest instrumentalists and Jon will share works ranging from a traditional Chinese tune to a meditative contemporary chamber work written specially for a trio of our guests.

On the first and third Sundays of the month, our new soloists Liam and Taryn will be sharing music that they hold close to their heart so that we can get to know them better – gospel and music theatre on the one hand, and haunting classics of the contemporary canon on the other.

The big event of the season, of course, will be Christmas Eve. As usual, there will be a 7pm service of lessons and carols - accompanied by Jonathan Vogtle - and an 11pm Candlelight Service. The later service will feature three exquisite contemplative works from the classical canon, presented by the full choir a capella – two settings of the “Oh Magnum Mysterium” text by Thomas Luis de Victoria and Francis Poulenc, and a piece that is new to the choir - “The Hymn of the Cherubim,” a setting of a traditional Orthodox text that compellingly evokes the voices of the angels, written by legendary queer composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. These focal works will be bookended by familiar tunes from many a Christmas Eve past at UUCB. As we share the special darkness and light of the evening, we hope to create a space for pondering the divine mysteries of the Christmas story and of life more broadly.

If you are around for the Boxing Day service on December 26th, you are in for a treat with a service organized by Fran Manly, featuring music provided by guitarist Doug Yeomans and the Stringitarians.



December Share-the-Plate: Journey's End



JOURNEY'S END
REFUGEE SERVICES

Journey's End was founded in 1985 and has served well over 100,000 refugees and their families in our vibrant immigrant community. Journey's End provides refugees with the resources and support they need to become successful, active, and productive members of our community by providing them with case management assistance when they first arrive. These services include finding affordable housing, scheduling necessary medical and social service appointments, introducing them to resources in the community, employment services, and setting up bank accounts. Journey's End also provides education programs and immigration legal services. They are working on translating Buffalo walking tour maps into other languages to better serve our international tourists. Journey's End also has an urban farm run by refugees on Brewster Street. Journey's End also founded and hosts the Western New York Refugee Film Festival, coming up in February, 2022. It is all virtual and free. Check out the schedule at wnyrff.org.

Several members of our church are taking part in the Home Again Project (see below).

There are many ways to help and the more hands the merrier!

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With your help, we will make a house a home

Join us for the Home Again Project

We're off to a great start! We've set our READY date! – **January 16, 2022**

That is our target date to complete the gathering of items and prepare teams for moving, cleaning, setting up and decorating the apartment on Moving Day. That day will be determined by Journey's End when they know we are ready.

Greet Kathy Spillman from Journey's End on December 5th when she joins the Sunday service as our December Share-the-Plate recipient!

We are developing a roster of teams dedicated to gathering furnishings, household goods and all things necessary to establish a safe and comfortable living space. We need space for storage of large items; trucks and teams of volunteers to help transport goods to the apartment; crews for cleaning, set-up and decorating, and grocery shopping. There is a role for everyone. Sign up in the Parish Hall after church or obtain the list of opportunities by e-mailing JVW61@aol.com.

What else can I do? Make a mitten cardholder. Collect and donate gift cards to fill the mittens for our mitten tree! (especially Target & Walmart for boots! Price Rite, Tops, Save a Lot & Dollar stores)

It's not too late to join this life-enhancing project. For more information, to volunteer to captain a team of volunteers, or to offer your assistance wherever it is needed, please e-mail Juli Van Woert (JVW61@aol.com). ***In times like these, when the need is so great, we cannot do everything, but we can do something.*** Please join us.



JOURNEY'S END
REFUGEE SERVICES

Save the Date !!!



UUCB Fun & Fellowship Auction

(In-person and On-Line)

Sunday

January 30, 2022

We've set the date: To avoid the holiday rush, we've decided on an early 2022 date. In keeping with the times, the auction will be both on-line and in-person. The in-person event will be on **Sunday, January 30th** before and after church. Stay tuned for details.

Be a Donor: It's not too late! **Deadline for donations is Sunday January 16' 2022.**

Be a "Creative Force": Share your ideas for how to make the 2022 Auction a success! Contact the Auction Team through Juli Van Woert JVW61@aol.com and Andrea Burke-Harris aburkeharris@gmail.com.

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

"NANCY'S GARDEN"

The centerpoint of UUCB's gardens, lovingly tended for decades by Master Gardener Nancy Thomas and a cadre of dedicated volunteers, are the brilliant red Dahlias. Carefully unearthed in Fall and stored for the winter, the Dahlias are re-introduced to the garden each Spring.

As a gift to the church each year, and a donation to the Fun and Fellowship Auction, Peter Sloan creates an original linoleum block print representing a revered aspect of UUCB life. This print, entitled "Nancy's Garden," captures the beauty of the Dahlias and their rich green foliage.

You have the opportunity to purchase this print, to honor not only the long-held place of our beloved church in beautifying the Elmwood Village, but the countless hours that UUCB's volunteers devote in service to the church and the community. Made-to order and shipped in a cardboard mailing tube after payment is received, prints may be purchased for \$25.00 which includes handling and postage.

Pick up an order form after church or place your order via e-mail to JVW61@aol.com. Include **the number of prints, the complete name and address to whom they should be mailed, and your phone number**. Send a check (write PRINT on the memo line) to UUCB, 695 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14222. To pay by credit card, **go to:**

https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=TBVBC2NA5ZH54&source=url



Board Notes and Updates

A warm “hello” to everyone on behalf of the entire UUCB Board of Trustees! As most of you are well aware of, our fall giving campaign is in full swing. If you haven’t made a pledge of financial support to the church, please consider doing so sooner versus later. As a reminder, there are three ways to share your pledge amount:

1. Pledge cards (which can be mailed to you upon request).
2. E-mail the Stewardship Team at stewardship@buffalouu.org or the office at office@buffalouu.org with your pledge amount.
3. Call the church office at 716-885-2136 and give your pledge amount over the phone.

The Board of Trustees met with Rev. Paul Langston-Daley on 11/3/21 as a follow up to the circle process he (and several trained facilitators) conducted with various UUCB members this fall. There is much discussion to come on this front, but one key theme that came out of our meeting with Paul was the concept of improved communication. We will need your help in thinking about ways in which current communication models at our church can be improved, or even ideas for new communication models that we could create and implement. Drop our President Martha Malkiewicz an e-mail at martmalk2@mac.com and let her know your thoughts.

Lastly, we wanted to acknowledge and thank Reverend Joan for the hard work she’s engaged in at our church since the COVID-19 outbreak. Whether it was cutting her sabbatical short to guide our church during the initial stages of the pandemic, engaging with people who were directly affected by the loss of Daniel and Sarah, or just generally, lovingly serving our congregation in the midst of these unprecedented times, we appreciate all she has given (and continues to give) to this church.

Happiest of holidays to one and all!
Be well, Michael Hill

TOWN HALL MEETING

Please come to the next Town Hall meeting - Tuesday December 7, at 7pm. Come in person or via Zoom. The Board will share what was learned from Rev. Paul Langston-Daly’s report on the Listening Circles and give information on the upcoming Minister’s Sabbatical.

UUCB Town Hall Meeting ZOOM

<https://uuma.zoom.us/j/97736244745>

Meeting ID: 977 3624 4745

One tap mobile +16468769923,,97736244745# US (New York)

Thanks!

~Martha

Martha E. Malkiewicz

martmalk2@mac.com

716-816-5049

UAIM (Universal Access & Inclusion Ministry Team)



December can be a very Joyous time for most people, but for some it is very depressing and blue. Rev. Joan will be doing a Blue Christmas Service in a few days. The Blue Christmas Service is for people who have a hard time coping during December. The Blue Christmas allows individuals to come together with others to acknowledge and accept their non-joyous feelings. There are many reasons for December to be a lonely month. Some folks may be estranged from their families, others may have family but the person cannot access the host house because the house or house's bathroom is not accessible for their mobility devices.

December can also be a very depressing month for people with mental health concerns. Because of their disability, they may also be estranged from their families. Other people may be mourning a recent death of a loved one. Also, someone may be struggling with a recent significant medical diagnosis for themselves or for a loved one.

UAIM would like to remind people to be attuned to others that may not be joyous this month. During this season, we say 'Happy Holidays' or 'Merry Christmas' without thinking of the other person's situation. Please be mindful of others who might not enjoy the festive season. If you do know someone struggling during this season, <http://www.211wny.org/> is a good web site to find support services for him or her. A few more websites that may be helpful are:

Erie County Anti-Stigma Coalition: <https://letstalkstigma.org/>

Erie County Mental Health <https://www3.erie.gov/mentalhealth/>

Erie County Warmline <https://www3.erie.gov/mentalhealth/warm-line>— a confidential peer support line for people who are having trouble coping with life experiences. Not a crisis hotline.

Monday – Friday, 5PM -11PM

Saturday and Sunday, 5PM -11PM

Phone 1-844-749-3848

Crisis Hotline (open 24 hours): 716-834-3131

REMEMBER: During this Season to be caring and compassionate to others who cannot be as joyous as you.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

As the coordinator of the Angel Project, I am seeking volunteers to cook a meal, provide a ride, or do a household task for others in our congregation who at times may need our support. Let us show that we are truly a loving community. If you can provide any of these services please contact me at josettepc50@gmail.com and leave me your full name, home address, a phone number and your email address.

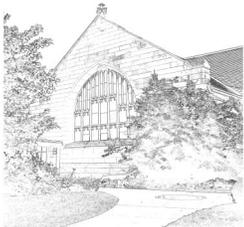
Thank you, Josette Cunningham



**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

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

