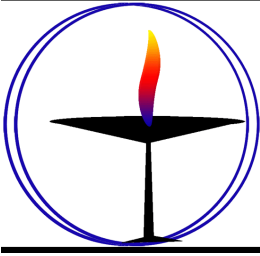


The UU Church of Buffalo



Gather – Inspire – Transform

March 2016 Newsletter

695 Elmwood Ave ∪ Buffalo, NY 14222

716-885-2136 - www.BuffaloUU.org



Faith Matters: Awake!

Bright morning stars are rising. Bright morning stars are rising.
Bright morning stars are rising.
Day is a-breaking in my soul.

Oh where are our dear fathers? Oh where are our dear fathers?
They're down in the valley a-praying.
Day is a-breaking in my soul.

Oh, where are our dear mothers? Oh, where are our dear mothers?
They've gone to heaven a-shouting.
Day is a-breaking in my soul.

Bright morning stars are rising. Bright morning stars are rising.
Bright morning stars are rising.
Day is a-breaking in my soul.

This is a traditional American folk hymn from the Appalachia. The bright morning stars are popularly thought to refer to angels. When I hear this song I see the men down in the valley, by the river, gently contemplating the miracle of rebirth in their hearts. I can see the women rising to into life, fierce, shouting deep and loud, strong in spirit. Both men and women are overwhelmed by a new sense of freedom and joy. Both feel dawn breaking in their souls – a true awakening. And the bright morning stars rise above the men, the women, the valley, and the Appalachian hills and are happy. Our worship theme this month is “Awakening.” Although this has been a relative “non-winter” weather-wise, it’s been cold enough. We have wintered long enough. We have rested, cocooned long enough. We have had enough snow and ice and freezing wind for one year. Come up, out, into the lengthening days. Let the bright morning stars rise in your soul. The waiting time is over. Sap is beginning to flow. Tree roots are stirring under the soil. Spring will officially begin on March 20th. “Lo, the Earth awakes again! Alleluia!” And one week after the equinox Easter bounces onto the scene.

Awake! Awake! Bright morning stars are rising. Yours in faith and affection, Joan

Joys and Sorrows

We join Chanda O'Donnell de Ramirez and her family in sending prayers to Chanda's cousin, Adrienne Eve O'Donnell.

We continue to send prayers of healing, strength and courage to Eve Holberg and Doug Sherman and to Mario Nunez and Mary Coleman.

We send deepest sympathies to the family of Wanda Hickok who passed away last month. A service celebrating her life will be held in May.

Our hearts are with Linda Lover and Olga Ruiz. Their niece died suddenly and tragically in February.

We rejoice with Marianne Westley who recently celebrated her 91st birthday.

Our gratitude pours out for our quiet hero, Dick Kraus, who arrived in the nick of time with his fire extinguisher to put out a small blaze in the apartment of Tonya Lewis and her family.

Announcements

The Rev. Joan Montagnes will be on vacation from March 11-21. If you have a pastoral care concern, please contact Rev. Fran Manly 716-480-9633 or Lay Pastoral Minister, Rita Capezzi 716-903-7935.

Pulpit Previews

March 6 "Message in a Bottle"

Rev. Joan Montagnes

Castaways throw messages in bottles out to sea in hopes of being found. We sometimes bury time capsules to be discovered in the tides of time to come. What do you hold securely, so your message can get through?



March 13 "The Root Children"

Sarah Martin

Spring is nearly upon us, and deep beneath the earth, the Root Children have been busy with preparations. Join us for this fun-filled multigenerational service and watch some of our young congregants perform the Root Children, by Sibylle Von Olfers, as a beautiful, unrehearsed pageant.

March 20 "A Pocket, Full of Liberation"

Francis Montgomery

Women have been shamed about their roles and bodies since the fall of Eve in the story of Genesis. Come hear about how the new, ever increasing presence of pockets in dresses has begun to give us a new found sense of freedom and is beginning to liberate us all!

March 27 "The Secret Garden"

Rev. Montagnes

Celebrate Easter with music and musings on spring and the resurrection of the spirit. Emerge from the quiet of winter. Be reborn. Refreshed. Come into the garden.

Rise and Shine

Liz Parke

Last month, winter finally appeared – with freezing temperatures, blowing winds and snow (lots of snow). Some days, it just felt too cold to leave a warm bed and venture out into the world. And that’s OK, because underneath a cozy comforter was the perfect place to dream beautiful dreams and start to envision what we would create, once we got up and about.

But it was more than just dreams and ideas; it was also a time for the previous night’s work to happen. Last night’s actions allow us to pull warm clothes from the dryer and clean dishes from the dishwasher in the morning, and position us to bring our dreams into the light of day.

At the church, the Board of Trustees is planning our annual retreat, where we set priorities for our work together over the coming year. As we work to identify the dreams which we will focus on and support, we also benefit from the prior season’s work. We would not be able to do our work without the following:

Ministry Teams – Under the loving guidance of Reverend Joan and our senior staff, the Ministry Teams continue to clarify their purposes and functions. These teams create and run the programs of our church, and the Board is honored to hold the structure which creates the space for their work.

Stewardship – The pledges made for 2016 are a physical manifestation of the strength of our hopes and dreams for the coming year. This treasure provides the means to transform time and talents into inspirational programming within and beyond our church walls.

Board Leadership – As I begin my service as Board President, I am honored to work with Jeff Lowrey, Vice-President; Tom Petrocelli, Treasurer; Dick Krause, Secretary; Julie Taylor; Jack Cavanaugh and Francis Montgomery. Jack, Francis and Dick, elected by you at the January Congregational meeting, have enthusiastically accepted the responsibility to step into the seats most recently filled by the hard-working trio of Barbara Klobberdanz, Kirsten Anderson and Sharon Walker.

In Buffalo’s climate of changeable weather, the Board and the congregation are well positioned to step out into what promises to be another beautiful day.



Faith Development News

Sarah Martin

Winter may have come rolling in late this year, but spring really is just around the corner. March is the month we celebrate the Spring Equinox, day balances perfectly with night, and the darkness of deep winter is behind us. Having grown up in Western New York, I know better than to associate March with blossoms and green grass, though.

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March is the season of muddy footprints on the kitchen floor, of endless chilly rain and capricious snow storms. It is the month of a handful of warm days, just enough to lull us into false hope that the worst of it is behind us, only to hit us with a blizzard moments later. It is the time of year when we preface all our travel plans with “weather permitting” just in case we find the thruway closed when it’s time to set out on our journey. March is a month of hot tea, hot soup, and the tentative hope that a few more minutes of sunlight bring us each evening.



For parents, March can be a month of burn-out and frustration. We’re ready to send the kids outside to play. We’ve been cooped up together for so long now that we’ve forgotten what it’s like to stretch out in our own spaces. We don’t remember what our coat racks look like unencumbered by snow gear and scarves, shovels and boots caked with slowly melting snow. Adding something fresh out our indoor routines can help to stave off these cold weather doldrums.

You may have noticed the marble mazes in our new “Head, Heart and Handwork” bags available for children to take into the service. Directions for this simple sewing project can be found by googling the phrase “fabric marble maze.” If sewing is your game and you’re looking for something intricate, check out this more complicated version: <http://sewing.craftgossip.com/tutorial-fabric-marble-maze-game/2011/12/18/>

Another google search worth exploring is “calming glitter bottle.” We will soon be adding these to the options we offer to keep little hands occupied during the service. A calming glitter bottle is made from glitter glue, water, glitter, and optional food coloring. When shaken, the sparkles and the colorful water create a beautifully captivating storm inside the bottle. This makes for a lovely, meditative experience that I enjoy just as much as my 7 year-old does.

Creating a family ritual that celebrates our UU values while connecting us at home is not only an effective way to pass the time during cold weather, but it brings religious education out of its Sunday morning isolation and into the rest of the week. A “kindness board” can be a cork board, magnetic board, or chalkboard posted anywhere in the home. Fill a few cups beneath it with chalk, colorful push pins, or fun magnets. Each day after school or work, family members can add something representative of an act of kindness that they witnessed or participated in during the day. Before or after dinner, or before bedtime, everyone gathers around the board to share their acts of kindness, and maybe to brainstorm new acts of kindness to share tomorrow.

Here at UUCB, we have some early spring fun coming up as well. March 6 is Girl Scout Sunday, and we’ll be recognizing the Girl Scouts in our congregation. At the March 13 service, we’ll be performing the Root Children pageant. This lovely Sibylle Von Olfers story celebrates the first blossoms of spring after a long, dark winter.

Our Third Friday Potluck will be held on March 18. We’ll celebrate the Equinox and earth magic while sharing a meal as a community. All are welcome to join us. And Friday, March 25 will be our second Fourth Friday Game Night. Be sure to join us in the Alliance Room for tabletop board games, Magic the Gathering, and more! A suggested donation of a couple of dollars to go toward pizza and drinks is much appreciated.

Have a beautiful end of winter, a glorious beginning of spring, and be sure to keep your eyes open for our Spring Quarter Adult Faith Development brochure, coming soon with all new offerings!

Music Notes – March 2016

The old idiom tells us, “March comes in like a lion, and goes out like a lamb.” Well, our service this month begins with *The Police* (...as in Sting, Andy Summers, and Stewart Copeland) and ends with *The Secret Garden*. This most certainly doesn’t roll off the tongue as well, or sound nearly as catchy – but I think it sheds some light on the breadth of our eclectic mix of musical treats in store for us this month!



Our first service in March, *Message in a Bottle*, will feature soloist Michael Sulzbach and Su Lee in that eponymous 1979 hit. We’ll also hear a few musical puzzles on that Sunday: keyboard works of Bach composed as something of a musical riddle, and also contemporary Estonian composer, Arvo Pärt’s sublime work for a cappella choral work, *Solfeggio*. This work is simultaneously a study on musical proportions, through the restriction to only the seven notes (and seven “doe a deer” syllables) of the diatonic scale, and also a truly powerful, emotional musical experience. March 13th will bring our beloved Faith Development annual service on *The Root Children*, and for Jo VonRue’s *A Pocket, Full of Liberation*, we’ll hear seminal turn-of-the-century British composer, Dame Ethel Smyth’s anthem for the Women’s Social and Political Union, *March of the Women*.

For Easter, Rev. Montagnes has built a very special service, integrating selections from the Marsha Norman/Lucy Simon musical *A Secret Garden*, based on the 1911 novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett.

All throughout this month, our Choir will also spend much of its focus preparing our Spring Music Sunday service, which will take place on the first Sunday of April – one week *after* Easter. Please mark your calendars for that special service, which will feature choral gems by Belá Bartók, Franz Schubert, and a rare early cantata by J.S. Bach, performed on historical instruments. We’re looking forward to sharing this wonderful music with each of you, and especially to sharing this sacred space that is ours not just every Sunday, but always at UUCB.

Best,

Daniel Bassin

Women's Society Program and Luncheon

Think Springtime when on Thursday March 17, we will welcome David Swarts, CEO of the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens. His topic will be " Buffalo Botanical Gardens, A Historical and Architectural Treasure" Prior to his position at the Gardens, Dave was the Commissioner of the NY State Department of Motor Vehicles and the County Clerk for 20 years.



We begin at 11 with appetizers and beverages. The speaker will commence at 11:30 and at 12:30 lunch will be served.

The fee for the lunch is \$15. You can make a reservation at Josettepc50@gmail.com or make a reservation and payment in the Parish Hall on the Sundays, March 6 and 13. If you wish to mail in your check it must be received in the church office by Friday March 11. Make your check out to the U.U.C.B. and in the memo line write: Women's Society Program. If you make your reservation on the 13 in person then payment must be made at that time. Payment at the door is no longer an option.

Come and learn more about this beautiful gem that we are so fortunate to have in our area.

FOOD PANTRY

The requested food item for the month of March is boxed macaroni and cheese. Place your donations in a bag labeled Women's Society and place it in the red storage bin. During the Women's Society program the bin will be on a table. It will also be near the reservation table on the 6 and 13. On other days it may be in the church kitchen or the Women's Society Room. Thank you for your support.

Thinking Ahead to Summer Worship

Summertime at UUCB offers an opportunity for members of the congregation to lead a number of our Sunday services. If you are interested in leading a service between June 29 and Labor Day, whether or not you have led one in the past, you will need to submit a simple proposal stating the theme of the service, a brief (50-100 word) description, and any preferred (or excluded) dates. The proposal should include anything else known about the service at that point, such as music, other participants, readings, etc. We will have support from the Music Director in planning summer services, so worship leaders are not responsible for finding their own music. All proposals are due in the office by April 15.



In developing their service, speakers will work closely with the Worship Associate assigned to their service.

If you have questions about summer services, please feel free to speak to Rev. Joan, or one of the Worship Associates: Fran Manly, Ken Manly, Francis Montgomery, Mary Sczepanski, Steve Wixson, or Steve Brachman.

Disability & Employment: We Need Change

by Beata Skonecki LMSW

Many people with disabilities have difficulty finding or keeping employment. As a patient advocate, I've read many accounts of what other glaucoma patients have gone through in the employment field -- and it makes me realize the need for change. One woman said that when she ran out of medical and vacation time, her company let her go. She never received accommodations on the job--the adapted equipment she needed arrived weeks after her employer forced her to leave.

Another person recounted a story of how she had to leave her job and stop attending college because of lack of accommodations. There "wasn't enough room" for her guide dog, she was told.

The stories go on and on. Many mirror each other. These are not isolated incidents; they happen all over the world.

Stories like this are the main reason that, in the United States, [fewer than 1/5 people with a disability are employed.](#)

There are so many people with disabilities who genuinely want to work and are able, but not given reasonable accommodations. These are accommodations that would not be difficult to secure: access to a magnifier, a larger computer screen, and/or someone's guide dog being allowed at the workplace. Unfortunately, employers are not always understanding. Even when regulations are in place — usually as a result of the Americans with Disabilities Act — they're not always followed.

So people with disabilities are pushed out of work. They're surviving on SSDI benefits that barely pay the bills. Then there are those who are still desperately searching for work and being turned down time and time again due to prejudice. Recent research shows [that employers express interest in candidates who disclose a disability about 26 percent less frequently than in candidates who did not.](#)

We need to do more to help people with vision impairments – and other conditions – find meaningful employment that pays fairly.

Some may not realize that there are a lot of people with various disabilities/illnesses who have undergraduate, and even graduate degrees. We're hard workers. We're a resilient bunch. We want, and are capable of, so much more than a tedious minimum-wage job. We have skills that we're eager to put to use; we want to help others.

We've pushed through a lot to get where we are, and we're more than willing to keep pushing. But we need help.



Denomination and Interfaith Connections

Sharon Walker

**St Lawrence District Regional Meeting: Covenant
April 1, 2016 - First Unitarian Universalist Society of
Syracuse, NY**



Registration is now open to one of our most important District meetings. During the business meeting there will be the vote on merging the St. Lawrence District with Ohio-Meadville, Metro New York, and Joseph Priestly Districts to become the regional Central Eastern Regional Group (CERG). For workshop information and to register please go to: www.sld.cerguaa.org. If you are interested in being a delegate email me at sharonw447@gmail.com

**WNY Cluster of UU Churches Social Justice Summit: Activate!
Saturday, April 23, 2016, UU Church of Buffalo**

Informational Flyer Attached. Do plan on attending.

Save the Date!

The Once & Future Church (or, "Chicken Little Goes to Church,"!

On May 20 & 21, the UU Churches of Amherst and Buffalo (NY) are co-hosting this weekend event: The Rev. Joan VanBecelaere will present information from her research on faith and church trends in the 21st century, and how we might prepare for the shift in how we might do church in the future. More information forthcoming - but mark your calendars now!



General Assembly June 22-26, 2016

Columbus, OH, Greater Columbus Convention Center, 400 N High St,
Columbus, OH 43215.

Heart Land: Where Faiths Connect. “ General Assembly 2016... will assemble leaders and communities of many faiths to worship together, learn from one another, and create a new vision of faith that no longer divides us, but connects us to an interdependent future that works for all.”

Registration opens March 1st.

Activate! ~ Saturday, April 23, 2016

Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo 695 Elmwood Ave Buffalo NY

The Western New York Social Justice Summit



We have almost 1000 Unitarian Universalists in Western New York. This summit will provide an opportunity to freshen up our approaches to Social Justice work in our congregations, and to find ways to collaborate and have more local impact on issues we care about.

\$20 at the door, childcare available with sliding scale of \$10-\$20-\$30

(Make checks payable to the UU Church of Buffalo)

<https://uua.wufoo.com/forms/r6z4pur059s025/> .

Registration Deadline: April 19

Childcare Request Deadline: April 6

Track Descriptions

Activate Racial Justice with Sharon Walker and Rev. Renee Ruchotzke. Participants in this track are strongly encouraged to take the UU Leadership Institute course "Intercultural Skills for a Diverse World" (\$30) <http://www.uuinstitute.org/courses/intercultural-skills>. We will explore ways to help members of our congregations be more skillful in partnering in local racial justice groups.

Activate BLGTQ Justice with Lisa Peterangelo. Please read the article: <http://tinyurl.com/jknpd89>. How do we keep the momentum going for further LGBTQ liberation going forward? Let's reject complacency and develop a plan going forward!

Activate Environmental Justice with Rev. George Buchanan

Pulpit Flower Ministry March Schedule

March 6 Hope & Dick Kraus and Bonnie & Jim Collins

March 13 Kathy Burke

March 20 Liz & Bill Parke

March 27 Easter Sunday



Only a few more Sundays remain open in this program year. If you would like to reserve flowers for a Sunday Service, please see us in the parish hall on Sunday, email us at pulpitflowers@buffalouu.org, or call us at 885-2136 ex.4. Reserve your special date to celebrate, honor, memorialize or thank people and/or events in your life. Your tribute will beautify our sanctuary, your dedication will be printed in our OSS, and you can take the flowers with you after the service or we can arrange to have them delivered to a local hospital. The cost to participate is \$35.00. Please note that due to a scheduling change, we regret that we will not be able to take reservations for flowers for July and August of this year. If you have previously reserved flowers for those months, please contact us and we will be happy to reserve other dates for you. As of this writing, open dates in this program year are April 10, April 17, May 29, June 12, June 19 and June 26.

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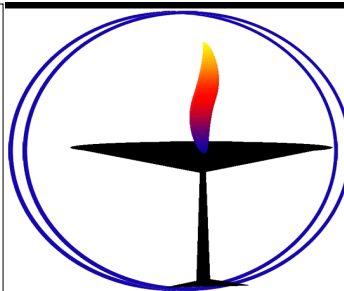
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Happening at the UUCB

UUCB Yarnbusters

Our “Not for Knitters Only” group continues: 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month, from 6:30ish to 8ish in The Women’s Lounge. In March, we will be gathering on the 8th and 22nd. Whether you knit, crochet or cross stitch give us a try. This is an open group, church membership not required, so please forward to any friends or family that may be interested. For more information on this; email Sharon Walker, at sharonw447@gmail.com.

Baby Blankets and Hats for Newborns of UUCB Families

Calling out to our knitters and crocheters (aka “knitwits” and “hookers”). Looking for a project? Minister to our families and give the gift of a layette to our new parents and at dedications. For more information please email Sharon Walker at sharonw447@gmail.com



UUCB Book Club

March 28 Meeting at 7 PM

We will be discussing *WHO STOLE THE AMERICAN DREAM?* by Hedrich Smith. Newcomers who have read the book are welcome. Everyone who plans to attend needs to call our host-of-the-month, Marion (833-3615) so she can plan for seating and refreshments. Looking ahead: on April 25, we will discuss *O PIONEERS* by Willa Cather.



Food Bank of WNY Share The Plate

Our \$2000 Share the Plate donation will provide 12,000 meals for families in our community. Michael Billoni, Business Development & Sponsorship Coordinator happily received our check. Check the Social Justice bulletin board for ways you can get more involved.

Keeping a Family Promise

Five years ago, our congregation made a commitment to help families who are homeless. Through the Family Promise program, we welcome up to three families to our church for one week of lodging, 3-4 times a year. Our next guests will arrive Friday afternoon, March 4 and volunteers are welcome to join the UU Family Promise team.

Volunteers work in pairs and can provide meals, or stay overnight, or just be present as a friend. They all attest that the rewards are far greater than the effort made. Families search for housing and work from the Family Promise headquarters during the day while their children continue to attend their own school. Volunteers provide meals and company, set-up the rooms in the RE space downstairs, and return the classrooms to regular use after the family departs. If you have not yet signed up, please let us know at office@buffalouu.org, or stop by the Parish Hall table after service Sunday February 14, 21 or 28.

