

The UU Church of Buffalo



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March 2017 Newsletter

695 Elmwood Ave . Buffalo, NY 14222

716-885-2136 www.buffalouu.org



March's Heart and Soul Question: Faith Matters: What does it mean to be a Community of Risk?

Rev. Joan Montagnes

"Do you want me to tell you something really subversive? Love is everything it's cracked up to be. That's why people are so cynical about it. It really is worth fighting for, being brave for, risking everything for. And the trouble is, if you don't risk anything, you risk even more."

— Erica Jong, [Fear of Flying](#)

Let's be really clear here. When I say "love" I am not talking about romantic or erotic love. When I speak of love, I mean a deep awareness of that network of mutual responsibility in which we live and move and breathe.

I am not entirely sure what Erica Jong was writing about, but I know what I believe and I believe that we need to risk loving the world with everything we've got. We need to love the hell out of the world. We need to love all the poverty, violence and oppression out of the world. Love is about justice. There is no room for cynicism, too much is at stake.

The other day, a newcomer told me she wanted to get into social justice, but she didn't know where to start. So true. Today, it seems, more than ever, we are faced with enormous threats to justice and yet, none of us can take up the entire fight at once.

Instead, I suggest you lay the great list of woes down on your kitchen table, pick each up, one by one with gentle hands, cradle its wound gently, and place it down



again with care. Which speaks to you? Which begs you to pick it up again? Which pulls most strongly at your heart? Follow your passion, and then dare to storm your way into Love's dangerous maw.

At this moment in history, the risk is not in acting; the risk lies in complacency. If we are going to be a community of risk, we must understand that we cannot be a comfortable community. We cannot be a quiet community. We cannot be an isolated community. We must sacrifice, speak out, and join others to make a difference in the world.

We do not want to be known as the community that is safe. We want to be known as the community that challenges injustice and creates safety for all.

This month, as we ask “What does it mean to be a Community of Risk?” ask yourself, your Covenant Group, your Choir, your Social Justice Team, your Book Group, your Women’s Society, your Religious Education Class, your Advisory Committee, “What risk can we take

to make a meaningful difference in the world? How can we, together, bend history toward justice?”

You will not be alone. The stakes are high. Remember, love is really is worth fighting for, being brave for, risking everything for. And the trouble is, if you don't risk anything, you risk even more.

Yours in faith and affection, Rev. Joan Montagnes



Joys and Sorrows



Our thoughts and hearts are with Grace Friel and her family. Grace’s brother, Alex, passed in January.

Long-time member, Fred Cadwell, passed away in February not long after his wife, Jean. A double memorial service will be held later this winter.

We hold Ed Kowal in our hearts. He is concerned about his sister's health.

We send healing thoughts to Lynn Mancuso who recently underwent shoulder surgery.

We hope for a speedy and uneventful recovery for Kirsten Anderson who broke one ankle and sprained the other last month.

Our thoughts are with Dodie Locke who is now receiving regular dialysis treatment.

John Rex has been having health adventures. He was to have shoulder surgery, but it was postponed for need of a pacemaker. The pacemaker was inserted and later that week John passed out twice, falling and sustaining minor injuries. Dear me. Our hearts are with you John!

Sandra Dunbar and Kaitlin Steinberg both celebrated milestone birthdays in January – 70 and 40 respectively! Aren’t we lucky they were born and they chose to spend their lives with us!

And all the best wishes go to Kate and Marilyn Bell-Schwede who celebrated their 44th anniversary in January.

Barbara Wagner, our beloved retired Minister of Music for 50 years, passed away February 17, surrounded by her family. We will be holding a memorial service for her March 5 at 3:00 pm.





Pulpit Previews

March Worship Theme: Risk



This month, in all our ministries, we ask: What does it mean to be a Community of Risk?

March 5 “The Game of Risk” Rev. Joan Montagnes

At the 2016 Fun and Fellowship Auction, Ken Manly won Rev. Joan’s “Sermon Topic of Your Choice!” He has asked her to preach about the importance of vital leadership, inevitable mistakes, and true humility.

March 12 “Dangerous Truths” Rev. Joan Montagnes

Truth is dangerous when it threatens the *status quo*. Lying lives offer comfort for some, but justice for none.

March 19 “A Celebration of Spring” Sarah Martin

A multigenerational Celebration of Spring service! There will be no religious education classes; the children are invited to join their families in the sanctuary for the service, which will include the **unrehearsed play, “Mother Earth’s Children.”**

March 26 “Risking Everything for a Better Life”, Speaker: Eva Hassett, Executive Director, International Institute of Buffalo; Worship Associate: Fran Manly

Immigrants and refugees are making Buffalo a wonderfully diverse and vibrant city, but coming to a new country is hard, and the status of many who are here and their friends and relatives who want to join may be under siege. How can we help, and what do we need to know and understand to do so effectively?

Friendship Potluck Dinner: Take a Risk, Build a Bridge!

We welcome the Turkish Cultural Center and the Peace Islands Institute for a Multicultural, Multigenerational Potluck Dinner. Since our guests will be Muslim, we ask that you prepare Halal food for your contribution to the Potluck. It’s easy!

Yes – Halal meat (available in most supermarkets, ask your butcher), vegetarian, and vegan dishes.

No – non-Halal meat, pork products, alcohol, alcohol-based flavorings (vanilla extract, etc.), anything cooked with alcohol.

March 11, 6:00 - 8:00 pm, Parish Hall



Minister’s Vacation

Rev. Joan Montagnes will be on vacation from March 17 - March 26.
Other staff members will be on duty during this time.



Religious Education and March Events

Sarah Martin, Director of Religious Education

March is our month of Risk at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo, and in Religious Education, we are going to explore what that means, and how stretching ourselves, stepping out into the world and taking a risk, can help us create a more just and compassionate world.

On March 12, Girl Scout Sunday, we will honor the scouts in our congregation, and hear from one of the troops that meets at our church about the volunteer work they've done this year with Journey's End, March's Share the Plate recipient, setting up an apartment for a refugee family settling in Buffalo.

Then, join us on March 19 for a multigenerational Celebration of Spring service! While the nursery will be open that day, there will be no regular Religious Education classes. Children are invited to join their families in the sanctuary for the service, which will include the unrehearsed play, "Mother Earth's Children".

Also in March, our Third Friday Potluck will take place on March 17—St Patrick's Day! Join us in the Parish Hall that evening, from 5:30 – 8:00 pm for a fun potluck meal and wonderful community. We'll

talk about creating a community-wide covenant to honor the time we spend together.

Everyone is welcome. Bring a dish to pass or \$5 for pizza.



And that's not all. In Adult Faith Development, we are excited to announce a few new upcoming classes.

"Intro to Unitarian Universalism" will be held on March 4, from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm in the Alliance Room. Led by UUCB members Julie Taylor and Shaun Sweet, this class is a fantastic primer on the history of Unitarian Universalism, the way our congregation functions both internally and in the larger Unitarian Universalist Association, and the core beliefs that make us Unitarian Universalists.

Later in March, we'll begin a four-part class on the Transcendentalists. From class facilitator Ann Rivera:

As was widely reported, President Obama pointed to the quote "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice" at the end of his presidency. The quote, woven into the rug in the oval office, was attributed to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. However, King was quoting Theodore Parker, a 19th century Unitarian minister and Transcendentalist. While Parker's story has been lost to later generations, Parker, like his contemporary Ralph Waldo Emerson, was a radical Unitarian minister, one who broke with his congregation over his embrace of Transcendentalist spirituality and social justice ideals. Yet, in later years, Parker (and Emerson) are often seen as canonical figures in Unitarianism. In this discussion group, we will explore how Transcendentalism and Unitarianism are related, how Transcendentalism was a radical spiritual and social movement, and the impact it had on literature and liberal ideals. Please join me for some fun reading and conversation!

This class will begin on Sunday, March 26, and run from 12:00 - 2:00 pm for four weeks.

To register for any of our Adult Faith Development offerings, or to find out what else we have in store, please stop by the Religious Education table on Sunday morning, or email sarahmartin@buffalouu.org.

Barbara Wagner

1937 – 2017

We mourn the passing and celebrate the life of Barbara Wagner, our Music Minister for 50 years, until her retirement in 2012. We just celebrated her 80th birthday on February 5, and she passed away, surrounded by family who had gathered to be with her from as far away as Australia, on February 17.

All who knew Barbara knew a force of nature. As well as per position as UUCB's Music Minister, she conducted the choir, manned our organ, was the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus founding Director, and was an instrumental member of the UUA ministry that compiled the hymnals we sing from every Sunday. She also taught at Nichols and Buffalo Seminary, and was a music director at Temple Beth Am, and of the Orchard Park Chorale.

Her memorial service will be held Sunday, March 5 at 3:00 pm at our Church. It will be filled with memories from family and friends and music from the UUCB Choir, the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus, and organist Garrett Martin. Reception to follow in the Parish Hall.



Courtesy William C. Hardy

March 2017 Music Notes

Daniel Bassin, Music Director



What Does it Mean to be a Community of Risk?

Our prompt question for this month's Soul Matters is provocative. And, in preparing for March 2017 with Rev. Montagnes, members of the thematic ministry team, our choir and the music ministry team, we considered many innovative and novel ways to consider the question, and to spark further, deeper introspection. No amount of preparation, however, could prepare any of us for the task at hand as we approach this new month. Of course, I'm referring to the awesome challenge of preparing to celebrate in song and remembrance, in community and in choir, and to both say 'Goodbye' while also continuing-on the singular legacy of Minister of Music, Barbara Wagner, whose life's work shaped, developed, and literally gave voice to the modern music ministry of our church.

We begin the month on Sunday morning, March 5, with Rev. Montagnes's service, "The Game of Risk." Our choir will have that morning off, as they prepare for that afternoon's memorial, but Su Lee, Michael Harris and Helen Lowry will treat us to selections by Bach, Gilbert and Sullivan, and Joni Mitchell, among others, to begin our month-long reflection on this notion of 'risk.'

Barbara Wagner's memorial service will be at 3:00 pm Sunday, March 5. Musically, offerings will be made by the UUCB Choir, the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus, and organist Garrett Martin.

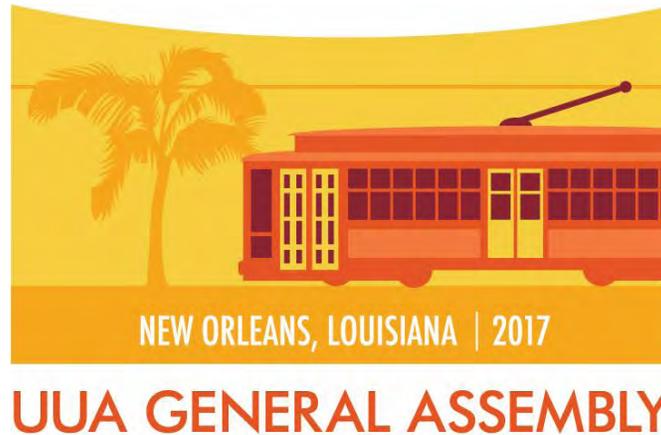
Our second Sunday service of the month, on March 12, will feature the Choir in Moses Hogan's powerful "*Elijah Rock*", and we'll also include a novelty song from the (in)famous 1987 film "*Ishtar*" which falls perfectly in-line that morning's theme of "Dangerous Truths."

On Wednesday, March 15, we will host a special concert by returning vocal/instrumental chamber ensemble, the Sotto Voce Vocal Collective. Directed by Jessie Downes, and featuring guest instrumentalists including our Music Director, Daniel Bassin on his cornette, this 7:30 pm concert is not-to-be-missed. Open to the public, we will collect a freewill donation to be shared among our guests for their hard work and artistry.

Following the March 19 "Mother Earth's Children" service, featuring instrumental selections to accompany and complement our children's annual springtime service, for the **March 26** service the Choir will compliment guest speaker Eva Hassett of the International Institute and "**Risking Everything for a Better Life**", with Mark David Buckles' setting for the Unitarian Universalist Sixth Principle, "**We Believe in World Community with Peace, Liberty and Justice for All**".

There is something inherently risky about lifting-up your voice, as there is in dedicating yourself to the deep, open communication that is the art of music. Our community was truly blessed to have Barbara Wagner, as we are to have the wonderful members of our Choir. And, speaking on behalf of our music program staff and the volunteer members of our music ministry, we are also so deeply fortunate to be able to committedly share our gifts among a community that appreciates and treasures music as does ours. We look forward to sharing this gift of music with you this month, and many, many into the future.

Beyond the Hedge
Denomination and Interfaith Connections
Sharon Walker



Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, 900 Convention Center Blvd, New Orleans, LA 70130
Registration and housing reservations open March 1, 2017

What's happening this year?

Election of new UUA President: For the first time in our UU history we will have a woman president

Democracy is a core value of our faith. In June, delegates will vote in New Orleans for our next UUA President and open Board and Committee positions. Delegates may vote at General Assembly or absentee. Our presidential candidates for 2017 are the Rev. Alison Miller, the Rev. Jeanne Pupke, and the Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray at the UU Ministers. More information on the candidates to follow.

2017 Ware Lecturer – Bryan Stevenson

Since 1922, the Ware Lecture has been a centerpiece at the annual national Unitarian assembly, and then at the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly. Past Ware Lecturers include the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., Saul Alinski, Kurt Vonnegut and May Sarton.

Bryan Stevenson is the founder and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) in Montgomery, Alabama. Mr. Stevenson is a widely acclaimed public interest lawyer who has dedicated his career to helping the poor, the incarcerated and the condemned. Under his leadership, EJI has won major legal challenges in eliminating excessive and unfair sentencing, exonerating innocent death row prisoners, confronting abuse of the incarcerated and the mentally ill, and aiding children prosecuted as adults. He is the recent author of the critically acclaimed New York Times bestseller and 2015-2016 UUA common read, *“Just Mercy”*, which was named by Time Magazine as one of the 10 best books of nonfiction for 2014 and has been awarded several honors, including the Carnegie Medal by the American Library Association for the best nonfiction book of 2014, and a 2015 NAACP Image Award.



For complete information please go to the GA webpage: www.uua.org/ga.
On- and off-site participation as well as scholarship opportunities are available.
Anyone may attend.

Notes from the Board

Jack Kavanaugh, UUCB Board President

While January is the start of the calendar year, February is the month that marks a new year for the Board of Trustees, as we welcome Andrea Burke-Harris and Mary Richert on board, and we bid farewell to Liz Parke and Julie Taylor. As part of this change, I am incredibly humbled and honored to serve the congregation and the Board as President for the next year.

As 2017 begins, we find ourselves in the midst of a social and political climate that pushes against the core values that we hold as a congregation. Changes both on a national and local scale threaten the safety and well-being of people throughout our communities. Our new membership in VOICE Buffalo is a large step in the right direction, but the Board believes that we must ensure that our conscience is heard, and we use our powers and abilities to strive towards justice.

It is in a similar spirit that the UUA and the UUSC have drafted a “Declaration of Conscience”, below, that speaks to the necessary vigilance and urgency that are

required. This was passed along to me; I passed it to the Board; the Board has voted to sign on behalf of the congregation. These values are not new to us, and it is important that we follow the lead set before us by the UUA, the UUSC and the other congregations that have signed on.

As a Board, we strive to create policies and processes that both protect the church, and allow it to function smoothly. As we wade through this difficult time, and live out our conscience in both private and public, it is important to point to our new policy on “Statements of Public Witness and Social Action by Individual Members” in the Board Policy Book (Section 4.6), available at <http://www.buffalouu.org/board-policy-book.html>

As difficult as the times ahead may be, I feel blessed to be part of a community of conscience like our church. It is the bonds and relationships within and outside our building that make us a unique and vibrant community that I am proud to call my own.

Unitarian Universalist Association Declaration of Conscience

At this extraordinary time in our nation’s history, we are called to affirm our profound commitment to the fundamental principles of justice, equity and compassion, to truth and core values of American society.

In the face of looming threats to immigrants, Muslims, people of color, and the LGBTQ community and the rise of hate speech, harassment and hate crimes, we affirm our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

In opposition to any steps to undermine the right of every citizen to vote or to turn back advances in access to health care and reproductive rights, we affirm our commitment to justice and compassion in human relations.

And against actions to weaken or eliminate initiatives to address the threat of climate change – actions that would threaten not only our country but the entire planet – we affirm our unyielding commitment to protect the interdependent web of all existence.

We will oppose any and all unjust government actions to deport, register, discriminate, or despoil.

As people of conscience, we declare our commitment to translate our values into action as we stand on the side of love with the most vulnerable among us.

We welcome and invite all to join in this commitment for justice.

The time is now.

You can sign your name to the Declaration of Conscience at <http://www.uua.org/action/show-love/declaration-conscience>.

Risky Business or, Stepping Out of Your Comfort Zone

Barbara Kloberdanz, Racial Justice Ministry Team

What does Risk mean to you?

Some winter days it can be the decision to step out onto what looks like an icy street and get going.

Maybe you are thinking about spending money to buy a lottery ticket when your funds are low. Yes, just day to day stuff.

Some of us enjoy the idea of physical risk. Jumping out of planes, climbing mountains, that sort of thing gives us a thrill.

Yet, where are we when it comes to taking a risk to stand up for our values? This is the core of the work we are doing in the Racial Justice Ministry Team. Our group has grown in the past year and we participate in many activities. We do this each in our own way and together in spirit.

Some of us attend SURJ – Standing Up For Racial Justice – which meets down the block at Lafayette Presbyterian Church. Others attend meetings and activities promoted by Buffalo Anti-Racism Coalition. We have been participating in various actions with VOICE Buffalo and the congregation is now an official member of that group. We led a Sunday service and we have conducted workshops here at UUCB and we have participated in the Third Friday Pot Luck Dinners.

Now we are in deep discussion regarding the possibility of having a Black Lives Matter banner at our church.

Also we are interested in an initiative that is called Mosaic Makers.

We are a welcoming team. Step out and step up. Take the risk to join us, you'll be glad you did.

Our March meeting is Saturday March 18, 1:00 – 3:00 pm in the Alliance Room.

If you have questions or concerns please contact bklober@aol.com.



WPA poster, 1941

Share the Plate Ministry Team

Brooke Harris

UUCB will be sharing our plate with Journey's End Refugee Services in March. Andy Cammarata, Executive Assistant/Community Outreach, will speak to the congregation at the March 5 Sunday service.

Journey's End Refugee Services is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization celebrating over 30 years of serving refugees in Buffalo. It is a Christian community-based organization with the mission of welcoming refugees without regard to ethnic origin, religion, or creed.

Every year JERS resettles over 500 refugees and serves over 3,000 refugee and immigrant clients through various programs. The resettlement process involves apartment selection and set up, airport reception and a warm cooked meal on the day of arrival, food and goods shopping, cultural orientation, meeting medical and social service needs, enrollment in school for children, English language training, and all other aspects of life that refugees need assistance with upon arrival in Buffalo.

In addition to the resettlement process, JERS assists refugees with:

- English Language Training
- Youth & Adult Education
- Vocational Training
- Job Placement & Support
- Citizenship Test Preparations
- Immigration Legal Services
- Interpretation
- Home Mentoring
- Entrepreneurship
- Agricultural Training
- And more!

Journey's End strives to provide refugees with the resources and support they need, to become successful, active, and contributing members of the Western New York community.



If you would like to help research and select organizations for our 'Share the Plate' ministry please speak with Brooke Harris, b.simpson.harris@gmail.com, or Charlie Kaars. We are always looking for new ideas!

Women's Society March Program and Luncheon

Linda Pellegrino – "Still Smiling"
March 16, 12:00 noon

Linda Pellegrino, host of "AM Buffalo" on WKBW-TV will speak on her career in broadcasting and her courageous struggle with cancer on Thursday, March 16. Her 2016 memoir is entitled, "Still Smiling." To accommodate Ms. Pellegrino's professional schedule, lunch will precede her talk.

Schedule: Light refreshments at 11:00 am. LUNCH WILL BE SERVED AT 11:30, followed by Ms. Pellegrino's talk at 12:00. Dessert will follow her talk.

Reservations and Payment: Cost of the luncheon is \$15 for Women's Society members and \$20 for non-members. The talk alone is free for members and \$5 for non-members. Reservations may be made and paid for after the Sunday services on March 5 and 12 or at the Church Office during office hours. Mailed payments must be received by Friday, March 10.



UUCB BOOK GROUP



Meeting on March 27 at 3:00 PM

We will be discussing *“When Breath Becomes Air”* by Paul Kalanithi at a member's home. Newcomers who have read the book are always welcome. Both members and newcomers need to speak with our host-of-the-month, Judy, or email her at Judithd786@gmail.com if you are coming so that she may plan for seating and refreshments.

Looking ahead:

April 24 – *“The Last Fine Time”* by Verlyn Klinkenborg;

May – *“On the Move”* by Oliver Sacks

June 26 – *“The Nightingale”* by Kristen Hanna

Women’s Society Memorial Service Reception Coordinator



Did you know that UUCB congregants can have a memorial service reception coordinated and hosted by the Women's Society, with the silver tea service, sweet and savory bites, linens and loving care? Judy Danforth, who has quietly and expertly coordinated this service for many years has retired, and the Women's Society is seeking someone – perhaps YOU – to provide this lovely gesture of support to our congregant and to those who loved that soul. Fortunately, your services would seldom be needed – at most six times per year – and a band of loyal and experienced staff and volunteers are ready to help with the details. Won't you consider it? Questions? Contact Nancy Wilkins at nlaurienwilkins@yahoo.com or contact the Church Office. Thank you.

Pulpit Flowers



March 5 - Collins & Kraus Families

March 12 - Marjorie Girth

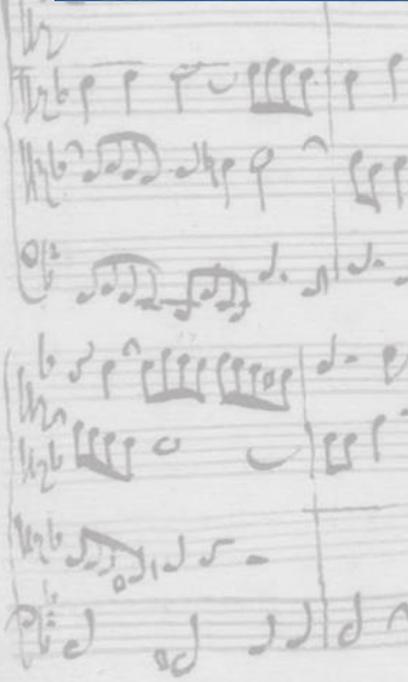
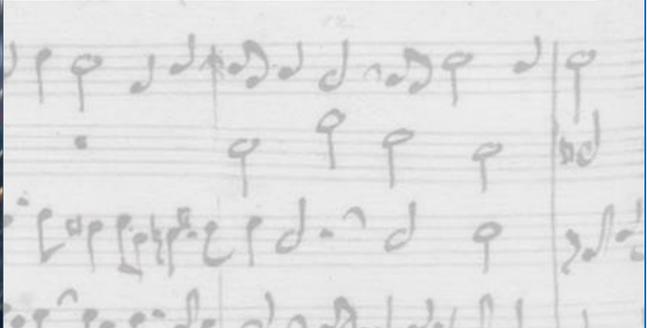
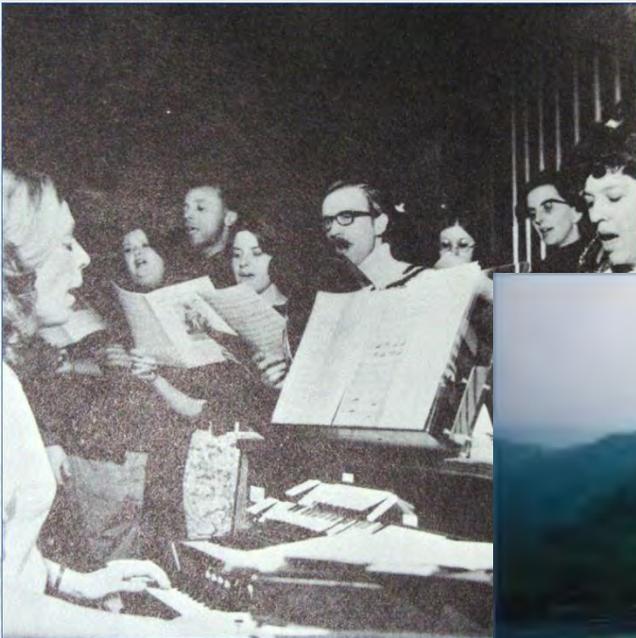
March 19 - Bill & Liz Parke

March 26 - Rebecca McCauley

Please send your text dedication and donation payment in the amount of \$35.00 (please write “Pulpit Flowers” on the memo line of your check) to the church office prior to your reserved Sunday. There are several open dates available in April and June of this program year. If you would like to reserve one of them in honor of, or to remember or celebrate, a special person, day or event, please see us at the Pulpit Flower table on Sunday, email us at pulpitflowers@buffalouu.org or call us at 885-2136 ext. 4.



UUCB Choir Valentines Dinner Fundraiser
Installations by Michele Costa, Photograph by Mary Richert





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

Minister:

Rev. Joan Montagnes

<mailto:minister@buffalouu.org>

Director of Religious Education:

Sarah Martin

lifespan@buffalouu.org

Music Director:

Daniel Bassin

music@buffalouu.org

Organist/Accompanist:

Su Lee

organist@buffalouu.org

Nursery Care Coordinator:

Beata Skonecki



Church Administrator:

Joshua Layton

office@buffalouu.org

Bookkeeper:

Donna Sentz

bookkeeper@buffalouu.org

Gatekeeper:

Sara Kirkland

office@buffalouu.org

Wedding Coordinator:

Paulette Notaro

weddings@buffalouu.org

Care Network:

Ginny Vaughan

716-768-1077

wixsonsg@gmail.com