

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF BUFFALO

January 2023 Newsletter

Gather - Inspire - Transform



Minister's Column: What does it mean to be a People who are Finding Our Center?

Extra! Extra! Read all about it! Unitarian Universalism is replacing the Seven Principles with a new covenant!

No, I'm not kidding.

Often when people are new to our church, they like what they experience. They like the music, the worship, the people, the religious education, and they like the fact that we are actively trying to make the world a more just and compassionate place.

But as people get to know us a little better, they notice that we have no particular deity, or scripture, or doctrine to hold our faith together. "But," they stutter, mystified, "There's no there, there. You have no center."

"Fear not!" we say. "Although Unitarian Universalists do not tell you what to believe, we have a set of promises about how we will be together. Our center is our covenant!" And then we hand them a copy of our Seven Principles and Six Sources and that's that. Everyone satisfied. (If you want a quick refresher on our Covenant go here: <https://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/principles>)

Now here's the thing. Some faiths have a set of beliefs (creed) that is written in stone. A creed will not change over time. We have no creed. We believe that revelation is not sealed. We believe that we are always learning and growing as individuals and as a world community. Our beliefs change over time.

Both a creed and a covenant can sit at the center of a faith. The difference between a creed and a covenant is that a creed is written in stone, while a covenant changes over time. Another difference between a creed and a covenant is that a creed is handed to you, while a covenant is a set of promises to which everyone can contribute. As we grow and evolve, our faithful promises to one another also need to grow and evolve.

Here's some history for you. Way back in the 19th century, our covenant read as follows: We believe in:

- the fatherhood of God
- the brotherhood of man
- the leadership of Jesus
- salvation by character
- the progress of mankind onward and upward forever.

Needless to say, as feminism, ecology, pluralism, and the theory of relativity took hold in our minds, hearts, and society, this old covenant began to look a tad thread bear. Our center was off kilter and we had to find a new center.

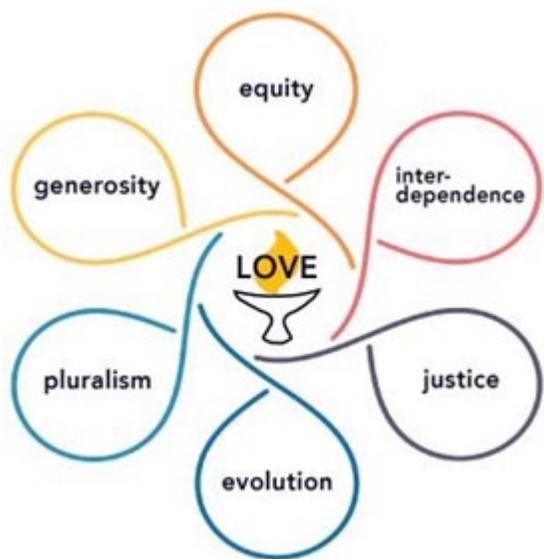
We can thank the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation for our new covenant of the Principles and Sources. Their suggested version of our center was instituted in the 1980's. It has been added to and updated a little since then but remains largely the same.

It's time for us to ask how our new understandings of #Black Lives Matter, restorative practice, power differentials, the electronic age, inclusivity, diversity, environmentalism, classism, mass shootings, #Me Too, voter's rights, immigrant rights, GLBTQI+ rights, disability rights and more have changed our hearts, minds, faith, and morality. How can we be a people of faith in this changing world? How can we use our faith to create a better world? How do we get relevant?

In other words, its high time that we have a good hard look at the world and ourselves and how we have grown and evolved over the last forty years. Is it time for a covenantal makeover?

The answer is a resounding "Yes!" It is time to not only live into a Unitarian Universalism of today, but a Unitarian Universalism of the future. It's time to get relevant. It is time to discover a new center.

A study commission has been formed and is busy at work interviewing groups and individual Unitarian Universalists. For more information about the Article II Study Commission see: <https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission> (Article II is the Article in the Unitarian Universalist



Association By-Laws that contains our Principles and Sources.) Currently, the denomination-wide discussion is focused around the values that would underly any proposed new covenant. The working list of values is: love at the center, with pluralism/ diversity, interdependence, equity, generosity, justice, and evolution/growth as expressions of our love.

Although change is hard and we may have become very attached to our Seven Principles and Six Sources as we know them, this is exciting stuff! This is a time of collective self-discovery. This is a time of finding our center as we grow and evolve.

The Article II Study Commission has released a draft of the new Article II. This document is the first attempt at replacing our current Principles and Sources. See: https://www.uua.org/files/2022-10/article2_draft_language_102022.pdf The Commission encourages us to read it once and observe how it makes you feel. Then read it a second time and observe how it makes you think. Then talk about your observations with your Unitarian Universalist friends. Could this be our new center?

And if this really jazzes you up, and I hope it does, come to the Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly in Pittsburgh, PA (or online) <https://www.uua.org/ga> to be part of the process of finding our center unfold even in real time. If you are interested in being a congregational delegate to General Assembly, just talk to any member of our Board of Trustees.

Yours in faith and affection, **Rev. Joan Montagnes**



Joys and Sorrows

- Josette Cunningham was in an car accident. We send her our best wishes as she heals from a concussion.
 - Happy Birthday to Eve-Holberg! So glad you were born!
 - Congratulations to Shaun Doyle who was recently inducted onto the St. Joseph Collegiate Institute Fine Arts Wall of Honor.
-

Pulpit Previews

Jan 1: I Shall Be Released, Shaun Doyle

Join in a ritual to bid farewell to the old year and release it! The Fire Communion separates the end of the year from the beginning, helping us to put into perspective the joys and sorrows, the changes and transitions, the ups and downs of the year.

Jan 8: Widening the Circle, Rev. Joan Montagnes

We, as Unitarian Universalists, are always growing and changing to widen the circle of concern. Lately we have discovered that our Seven Principles and Six Sources, the center of our faith, no longer applies to who we are. Our center is no longer relevant in today's exciting world of love and justice. Fear not! We are re-centering our faith.

Jan 15: Connection through Music, Leanne Darling

Music moves us in so many ways - it can relax, energize, and inspire us. It can both help us find our center and create powerful connections with others from all backgrounds. Let us explore together the ways music can create joy, foster self-expression, and strengthen community.

Jan 22: Time, Death and the Space Between the Stars, Rev. Richard Gilbert

Aging definitely helps to clarify the mind. I've often preached on how we live; this sermon considers how we die. I'll discuss medical aid in dying legislation in New York in the broader context of the meaning of life and death. "The wonder is that it has happened at all."

Jan 23: Roots and Wings, Joan Montagnes

Life can feel like an endless whirlwind of chores, complications, and crises. Survival can depend on finding not only your center, but also becoming rooted to the earth, and allowing yourself to soar in elation.

Rev. Joan on Vacation

Rev. Joan will be on vacation from Jan 10-22. If you have pastoral concerns, please contact one of our Lay Pastoral Ministers: Barbara Brown, Maryellen Cone, Karen Jarvis, Lynn Mancuso, or John Marohn. Worship will be provided by the powerful and boundary stretching musician, Leanne Darling and by stalwart leader of our faith in Western New York and beyond, Rev. Richard Gilbert.

Tuesday Coffee Klatch



Join Rev. Joan for a cup of joe (or tea, or cocoa) Tuesday mornings 10am-11am in the parish hall. No program, no agenda, just fellowship and good company. All welcome! Someone might even bring cookies!

Religious Education & Faith Development News



Greetings from the Religious Education Ministry!

Jess Pond, Director of Religious Education

Hello UUCB!

Thanks to everyone who celebrated the holidays with us this winter – by contributing a gift for Family Promise, a pair of mittens for the Mitten Tree for Journey’s End, coming to the Holiday Potluck, or joining one of the Christmas services!

Help us continue to celebrate the wonders of winter this month by making snowflakes at the RE table to decorate the Parish Hall!

Religious Education classes are on a holiday break December 25 and January 1. Classes resume on January 8.

In Adult Education – Stay tuned for more information about a Compassionate Choices in Dying Workshop happening on January 22 after service. Lunch will be provided.

I hope everyone has had a wonderful holiday season, and many bright blessings for the New Year!

Jess

It’s never too late to register for Religious Education! Please complete this form if you would like to register your child for Religious Education classes:

<https://forms.gle/4LzWAX73L8vwNQWV6>

Check out the RE Calendar here: <https://rb.gy/hxvmju>



Adult Education Programs:

Banned Book Club with Mary Lou Hill and Sharon Walker

“Books Unite Us. Censorship Divides Us”



Beginning January 18, the Banned Book Club will be discussing Alex Gino’s YA novel *Melissa*. The group meets the first and third Wednesday of the month, from 7:00 - 8:30 in the Marge Gardiner Room. Other books we plan to discuss include George M. Johnson’s *All Boys Aren’t Blue*, Angie Thomas’ *The Hate You Give* and Art Spiegelman’s *Maus*. For more information, contact Jess Pond at jpond@buffalouu.org or Mary Lou Hill and Sharon Walker at uucbbbc@buffalouu.org



GLITTERING PRIZES!
A Most Excellent History of Awards
Michael Harris, instructor

Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo, 695 Elmwood Avenue; Buffalo, NY 14222
14 meetings; Wednesdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m., January 11 to April 12, 2023
Cost: \$75 for full course, or \$10 per session

The course will start remotely using the Zoom platform, with the option to move to in-person meetings at UUCB. To register, send your check (made payable to UUCB) to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo; 695 Elmwood Ave.; Buffalo, NY 14222. [Put 'Glittering Prizes' on the memo line of the check.] For information, call 716-885-2136, or email us at office@buffalouu.org.

GLITTERING PRIZES: The Rationale

We all love awards – giving them, receiving them, and watching other people get them. It's built into our genetic code to acknowledge the best of human achievement. This course will cover the most renowned of these highly sought-after prizes and citations: from knighthoods to Nobels, from Pulitzers to Peabodys, from Olympics to Oscars, from Miss America to MacArthur 'Genius Grants' – how they got started, how they've chosen their honorees, and how these judgments have stood up over time. As for saluting those who were rightfully commended, or questioning those who were dubiously awarded, you'll be the judge on that score!

Syllabus

Session One (January 11): Going for the Gold – The Olympics Then & Now

Session Two (January 18): For All the Saints – Roman Catholicism and Canonization

Session Three (January 25): The 'Noble' Prize – Knighthood, Dames and Other Civic Honors

Session Four (February 1): All Roads Lead to Rome – The *Prix de Rome*

Session Five (February 8): Accolades from Stockholm – The Nobel Prize

Session Six (February 15): Joseph Pulitzer's Journalistic Legacy – The Pulitzer Prize

Session Seven (February 22): Representing the American Woman – Miss America

Session Eight (March 1): Thanks for the Use of the Hall – Halls, Walls and Walks of Fame

Session Nine (March 8): "I'd Like to Thank the Academy" – A History of the 'Oscars'

Session Ten (March 15): Broadway's Big Industrial Show – The 'Tonys'

Session Eleven (March 22): You're the Man! – TIME magazine's "Person of the Year"

Session Twelve (March 29): Betting on Genius – The Rhodes Scholarship and the MacArthur Fellowship

Session Thirteen (April 5): Rewarding the Word – Literary Prizes

Session Fourteen (April 12): Whither Awards? The End of Awards?

Music Notes

Dr. Jessie Downs, Music Director



On Sunday January 1st, the UUCB Music Team will ring in the New Year with classical selections that capture both the fiery and reflective nature of the Fire Communion. Chris will begin the service serenely with Dimitri Shostakovich's "Prelude No. 1." At the Offertory, Jessie will share the aria "Donde lieta usci" from Giacomo Puccini's *La Bohème*, whose refrain of "Addio, senza rancor (Goodbye, without remorse)" captures the bittersweetness of setting aside the past in order to face the future. As the Reflection, Taryn will sing Francis Poulenc's "Air Grave," which continues with the theme of setting aside what is no longer needed, captured in the line "Ah! fuyez à présent, malheureuses pensées! (Ah, begone now, unhappy thoughts!)" and evocative imagery of a brighter future. Finally, Chris will close the service with Manuel de Falla's fiery "Danse du Meunier."

On Sunday January 8th, the soloists, Chris, and Paul Zanolli will share popular tunes about widening the circle - and more generally embracing change - as Joan speaks about the future of the UU Principles. Liam and Paul will kick off the service with Bob Dylan's "The Times They Are A'Changin'." At the Offertory, Paul will accompany Taryn and Helen on "Wider Circles" by the folk group Rising Appalachia. As the Reflection, our soprano and alto soloists will sing a different kind of duet - "(I have been changed) For Good" from Stephen Schwartz's musical *Wicked*. Chris's piano solo version of David Bowie's "Changes" will close out the service.

On Sunday January 15th, join violist and music educator Leanne Darling – who led us in a sonic mediation in September 2022 - for a service about finding connection to ourselves and others through music. You won't want to miss this boundary-stretching participatory service.

On Saturday January 21st at 2pm, we enter our second year of the Casual Concert series with a Sound Healing event led by Meagan Marcus, a Reiki Master and Sound Healer who will guide you through a journey of self-love and inner healing with her sacred instruments.

On Sunday January 22nd, the soloists and Chris will support visiting speaker Dick Gilbert's service about compassionate choices in dying. The service will open with "Safe Passage" by Mary Grigolia, sung by the UUCB Soloist Quartet. At the Offertory, Helen will sing "Temporary" by John Bucchino - a contemporary musical theatre song about the ever-changing seasons of life. As the Reflection, Beth White will share an aria about helping a loved one cross over, excerpted from Jessie Downs's recently premiered opera *The Second Sight*. Finally, Chris will share the meditative "Poem No. 1" by Alexander Scriabin.

On Sunday January 29th - the final Sunday of the month - the congregation will be treated to many of the choral numbers they expected to hear on Christmas Eve. These ethereal pieces will encourage us to find our center and reach out joyously from it as we carry the light of the holidays into the new year.



January Share-the-Plate: [Clean Air Coalition of WNY](#)



The Clean Air Coalition builds power by developing grassroots leaders who organize their communities to run and win environmental justice and public health campaigns in Western New York. They envision a world where our environment promotes health and equity and where systems place communities at the forefront of decision making. To learn more about their campaigns, please check out <https://www.cacwny.org/campaigns/>. Their monthly general meeting is Thursday, January 19th at 5:30PM at 371 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14202 where they will be discussing their current and future work.

Pulpit Flowers



Floral bouquets for the pulpit can be ordered for February to December, 2023. Please contact Sandra Bissontz at smp1127@yahoo.com to inquire or place your order. Cost is \$50 and the flowers are yours to take home after the service. If you chose not to take them, they will be given to Veteran's Hospital.

Hello from the Board of Trustees!

Happy Winter and to longer days here to come. A few notes on upcoming events. **On January 22 at noon after church we will be having our winter congregational meeting right after church.** The meeting will also be hosted on Zoom as well. Hope to see you all there. HAPPY New Year!

Also, how about representing OUR Congregation this summer at the GA? General Assembly is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists, where we conduct business of the Association, explore the theological underpinnings of our faith, and lean fully into our mission and principles. The dates are June 21 - 25, 2023 online or in-person in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Our congregation can send up to 7 delegates. Please consider attending on-line or in person! Pittsburgh is an easy drive from Buffalo! More info from Rev. Joan or check UUA.org

- Bridget Evans, Shawn Sweet, John Petrocelli, Michael Hill, Bobby Withrow, Kate Bell-Schwede, Thea Hassan

How to be in touch with your Board of Trustees:

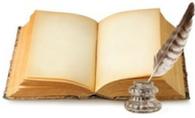
- To reach the Board, email board@buffalouu.org.
- Attend Board meetings (3rd Wed at 7pm in the Alliance Room or via Zoom):
<https://uuma.zoom.us/j/97736244745>.
- To view Current Board of Trustees members click here: [Board of Trustees](#).

Always be aware that Rev. Joan's Identity can be Used and Abused!

Many emails that look like they are from Rev. Joan are not! Rev. Joan will never: Ask you for gift cards via an email or send you an email on an account ending with gmail.com – **trust only her buffalouu.org account**. If you receive one of these emails, block the sender so they will be unable to send you any more requests. Sadly, there is nothing the church can do to stop the emails because they do not come from the church.

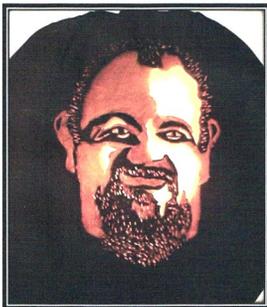
Announcements, Events and Opportunities, Oh My!

New Member Signing Ceremony: Jan 8, 11:30am in the Sanctuary



If you have completed the Coming of Age program or a New Member's Class, we invite you to become a member of our congregation. Come sign the Big Book! Join the heritage and hope of our beloved community. Discover a deeper belonging.

Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo Women's Society Speaker Luncheon Series presents:



Channeling Stanley Tucci

Adventures in Dining Out

Andrew Galarneau

Buffalo News Food Editor & Restaurant Critic

Thursday, January 19, 2023

Parish Hall, 695 Elmwood @ West Ferry

Refreshments: 11 am.....Donation \$3

Presentation only: 11:30 am.....Women's Society members free, non-members \$5

Lunch: 12:30 pmWomen's Society members \$20, non-members \$25

If paying by mail, church office must receive payment by noon, Friday, January 13th

Please make checks payable to "UUCB", with "Women's Society Lunch" on the memo line

Email contact: rgeraci@roadrunner.com

Ready to play?



Member and art educator Julie Carter is hosting the Buffalo Collage Club at our Church! Be ready to use varied materials and play with shapes, textures and colors to create a unique collage each month. Julie will provide guidance and a changing theme. No experience necessary. All you need is a playful attitude and she will direct the activity. Feel free to bring any materials you'd like to use or simply work with what is provided. This class is free of charge. **We meet at Church on the 2nd Wednesday of each month.** See you there!

Compost Pile Update—Save the Date!



A "no commitment" turning of the pile is scheduled for April 15 at 9:30AM. Those thinking about helping or those just interested in getting a few pointers about composting are welcome to attend. Our new Custodian of the Henry David Thoreau Memorial Composter, Alex Gugliuzza, did the first turning recently of the newly forming pile and it would be nice to have more than one custodian. Contact Tony Keller at kelleranthony290@gmail.com for info.



*Love is the doctrine of this church,
The quest of truth is its sacrament,
And service is its prayer.*



Our Women’s Society wishes to thank our congregation for their generous donations of Ramen noodles and money to purchase socks for the men and women in our WNY prisons. Some folks from our congregation joined volunteers from other churches and organizations, to help pack the decorated bags at Blessed Trinity Church. We look forward to continuing this annual tradition and hope more will join us.

The Justice Ministry would love to thank the Congregation for such enthusiastic participation in our Adopt-A-Family partnership with Family Promise. This tree full of tags, each with a needed item for a family of need, is now bare as every single tag was claimed. That, along with the mittens, hats and scarves, will make the holidays brighter for many!



The Justice Ministry would also love to thank the Congregation for your generosity in donating Dignity Bags to Justice for Migrant Families. People released from ICE detention find themselves with the clothes they were detained with and any other personal affects in a garbage bag. Thanks to Justice for Migrant Families and with your help, many will now be taking the next part of their journey with backpacks, snacks, weather-appropriate clothing, and words of encouragement given from this Church. This photo of the deep sedan trunk absolutely stuffed with dignity bags was only a portion of the donations. Thank you so much! Justice

For Migrant Families will continue to need dignity bags, and any members of the congregation feeling moved to contribute should reach out to Justice for Migrant Families directly at info@jfmfwny.org to make arrangements.

Would you like to be a part of the Justice Ministry? The Justice Ministry is one of the efforts of this Congregation to further justice in our community. We coordinate the Sunday Share the Plate efforts and are always on the lookout for other ways to make our presence in the interdependent web of the Western New York community a positive one, assisting the efforts of our community members doing social justice work. If you are interested, please feel free to reach out to any member of the Justice Committee. If you have Share the Plate recommendations, please reach out to Stephen Wixson.

