

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF BUFFALO

March 2023 Newsletter

Gather - Inspire - Transform



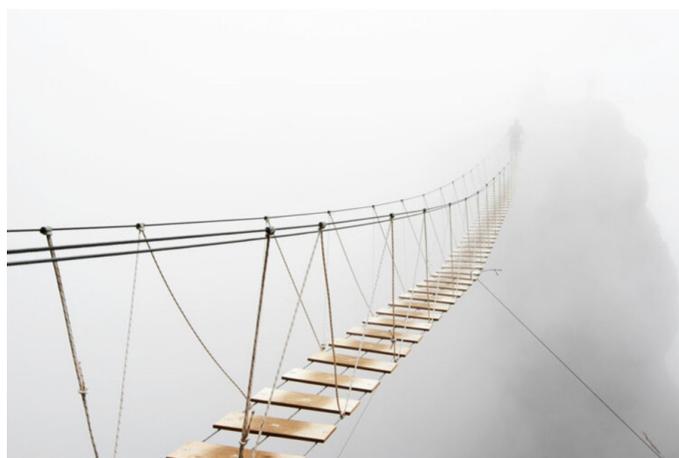
Minister's Column: What does it mean to be a People of Vulnerability?

Researcher and storyteller (and Master of Social Work), Brené Brown, says that many different emotions can bubble up in our hearts when things are uncertain in our lives. We may feel stressed, overwhelmed, anxious, or worried. We might deny, ignore and avoid whatever is stressing us. We might be excited about new opportunities. Or

when we are uncertain, we might feel afraid and vulnerable.

I suppose, when we are stressed, we can feel a whole messy soup of all those emotions at once.

By now, most of you have heard that I am retiring from active ministry on July 31, 2023. Although I am very excited to discover where the next chapter of my life will lead, I also feel like I am heading onto a rickety suspension bridge over a chasm above of roaring river of uncertainty soup.



I've been a Unitarian Universalist minister, if you count my internship year, for thirty years. The big question I am asking myself is, "Who am I beyond the mist-covered ending of ministry?" This kind of self-examination leaves a person feeling a little exposed to the elements and vulnerable.

No doubt you have made a few life crossings that left you feeling a little vulnerable – taking a new job, having a child, waiting for the test results, losing a loved one, telling someone the truth from your heart...

Vulnerability is an emotion that arises during times of uncertainty, risk, and exposure. Vulnerability is how we feel when we realize we have no control over life events. We all feel vulnerable from time to time. The question is, "How do you respond when you feel vulnerable?"

We can respond with false bravado, by melting down into a hot mess, by running away, or we can respond by gathering all our courage and faith and saying, "Bring it on!" When I have felt vulnerable (and ministerial leadership provides multiple opportunities each day to feel vulnerable) I have responded in every way possible, sometimes all at once.

To be People of Vulnerability it is important to understand four things deep in the temple of our hearts:

That feeling vulnerable is a perfectly healthy response to life's many uncertainties

That life is basically one uncertainty after another

That every response is the right response
Eventually, one way or another, we will move ahead in life and love

I am aware that the announcement of my retirement leaves UUCB with some uncertainty. I invite you to honor your response to the uncertainty and know that your congregation is already moving ahead in life and love.

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

Joys and Sorrows

Congratulations go to Ginny Vaughan and Steve Wixson who recently celebrated their 46th wedding anniversary.

Pulpit Previews

March 5: Cut, Cracked, and Broken Hearts, Rev. Joan Montagnes

Life is full of betrayal, broken trust, and failure. A reflection on what to do with heartache and pain.

March 12: The State of the News, Sheila Rahman

For more than 150 years, the newspaper industry model served millions of readers. What's the state of the newspaper industry today? How has it changed? How have readers changed? The industry continues to evolve. Reader habits and technology are driving that evolution in ways that we could not have imagined 30 years ago.

Sheila Rayam is the Executive Editor of *The Buffalo News*. She began her tenure at the *News* in August of 2022. Prior to being named Executive Editor of the *News*, she was the Executive Editor on *the Observer-Dispatch* in Utica and the *Times Telegram* in Herkimer. Ms. Rayam began her career more than three decades ago as a clerk at the *Democrat and Chronicle* in Rochester, N.Y. A native of Rochester, Ms. Rayam is a graduate of Buffalo State College and a proud member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

March 19: Re-Discovering Spring, Joan Montagnes

Begin Spring by conjuring language from the Earth's beauty and spells celebrating the magic and wonder of the natural world.

March 26: Creating a safe sacred Space, Covenant Group Ministry

In our Covenant groups, we find that, when we are present to one another – attentive and aware – listening and waiting – we may encounter something that cannot be put into words. In “the space between us,” something happens. Today we celebrate our connections and welcome you to join us.



Religious Education & Faith Development News



Greetings from the Religious Education Ministry!

Jess Pond, Director of Religious Education

Hello UUCB!

Thank you to everyone who celebrated Love with us last month, especially at the Share the Love Baking Party and at the Turkish Potluck!

In March we'll be exploring the idea of Vulnerability together, so check out the RE table throughout the month for lots of fun activities to help us understand and explore what it means to be vulnerable.

Bright blessings, Jess



Spread the Love Baking Party, February 4



Turkish Potluck, February 11

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>

FINDING OUR CENTER SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS: Join Rev. Joan and DRE Jess on Tuesday evenings, 7:00-8:30, in the Alliance Room to learn about and talk about the proposed changes to Article II – the part of the UUA bylaws that outlines the center of Unitarian Universalism. There are two sessions remaining in March – 3/7 and 3/14. To register, please email Jess at jpond@buffalouu.org.

Adult Education Programs:

INTRODUCTION TO SUFISM: Harvard and UB professor of Islamic studies, Yunus Kumek, will be offering an eight-session introductory course on Sufism. Sufism is generally referred to as Islamic mysticism or Muslim spiritual teachings in popular Western discourses. In this course, we will examine the practical aspects of Sufism in our everyday life, especially focusing on meditative, philosophical, and psychological practices that have relevance and meaning in personal spiritual journeys. The class will take place on Sundays in the Marge Gardner room. The registration fee is \$35. Please register by emailing Jess at jpond@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: \$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 of Remaining Classes

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?

Banned Book Club with Mary Lou and Sharon

"Books Unite Us. Censorship Divides Us"



On January 18, the Banned Book Club began discussing Alex Gino's YA novel *Melissa* (Previously published as *George*) by Alex Gino. We'll be following this with the YA books: George M. Johnson's *All Boys Aren't Blue* and Angie Thomas' *The Hate You Give*. Art Spiegelman's *Maus* will close things out the spring.

All are welcome and you can join us at any time. We meet the first and third Wednesday of each month, from 7:00 - 8:30 in the Marge Gardiner Room. For more information, contact Mary Lou Hill and Sharon Walker at uucbbbc@buffalouu.org or Jess Pond at jpond@buffalouu.org.

Music Notes

Dr. Jessie Downs, Music Director



On Sunday March 5th, guitarist Paul Zanolli will support the Music Staff in offering up folk-pop -style tunes about the month's theme of vulnerability. The service will kick off with the Paul Zanolli original "Scribbles and Scratches" about the vulnerability of the artistic process. At the Offertory, Paul will team up with Lia and Taryn on "Bobby" by Alex G - a song about dissociating with the vulnerable parts of ourselves. At the Reflection, the Helen and Paul duo return with the heart-rending "Hurt" by Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails - also known for the mellower rendition by Johnny Cash. As the Postlude, Helen will share the short but sweet "Fabric" by Half Waif, with the lyrics "But you keep breaking me apart. You keep making me a part." that echo the service's title.

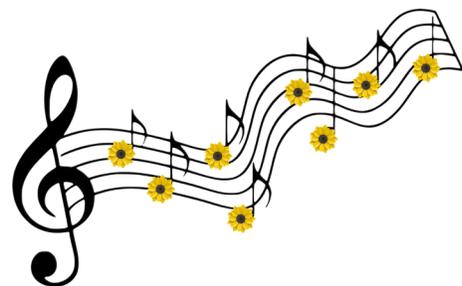
On Sunday March 12th, we will be joined by guest speaker Sheila Raham – editor of the Buffalo News. In support of her sermon, Chris Sierzchula, Mike Harris, and the UUCB choir will share songs with a news theme. As the Prelude, Chris will share a piano arrangement of The Beatles' "A Day in the Life" (which opens with the line "I read the news today, oh boy!"). At the Offertory, the choir will share the spiritual "Ain'a That Good News" as arranged by William L. Dawson. As the Postlude, Michael will share the comedic "That is the End of the News."

March's Casual Concert will be held on Saturday March 18th at 2pm. Join beloved church members Bruce Pfeffer and Martha Malkiewicz for a piano four-hands recital. Martha and Bruce began their four-hand piano collaboration in 2017, inspired by a mutual interest in hosting musical "house parties" in the spirit of the 19th -century Schubertiades. For their March 2023 Casual Concert, Martha and Bruce offer "Keyboard Duets from Four Centuries," featuring compositions by Mozart, Schubert, and Debussy, as well as what may be the earliest example of an original work for two players at one keyboard.

On Sunday March 19th, Joan will be speaking about the tragic extinctions of many plant and animal species - not only from the world but from our vocabulary – as we celebrate the Vernal Equinox. Chris Sierzchula will begin this contemplative service with a contemplative classical piano piece. At the Offertory, the choir will share Johannes Brahms' "Die Nachtigall, sie singt so schön (The Nightingale sings so sweetly)." As the Reflection, a subset of the choir will sing an 8-part rendition of "Edelweiss" from *The Sound of Music*. As the Postlude, Taryn will sing "Meadowlark" from *The Baker's Wife*.

On Sunday March 26th, representatives of the Covenant Group Ministry will be speaking about how their ministry creates "safe sacred space," while Lia and Taryn share popular tunes about doing just that. The service will start out with "Beautiful City" from *Godspell*. At the Offertory, Taryn and Lia will sing "A Safe Place to Land" by Sara Bareilles and Lori McKenna, as recorded by Bareilles with John Legend. As the Postlude, Lia will sing Bruno Mars's "Count on Me," with Paul Zanolli on guitar.

Supporters of the Music Ministry should also mark their calendars for two big upcoming events – "A Night at the LifeSong Cabaret" on Saturday April 15th at 7pm – with emcee Shaun Doyle, and Henry Purcell's baroque opera *Dido and Aeneas* on Friday May 5th at 7:30pm, featuring the UUCB Choir, Music Staff, and several special guest musicians from around the country. Stay tuned to weekly e-blasts for more information about these events' programs, ticketing, and donations.



March Share-the-Plate: [Bornhava](#)



Our Share the Plate recipient this month will be Bornhava. Since 1983, Bornhava has existed to meet our community's need of a place for young children with disabilities to receive services, using play to create the foundation for children to thrive. Bornhava serves children (birth to 5 years) at their homes and in home-like environments at the main campus in Amherst and at 5 other locations throughout Erie and Niagara counties.

We will be collecting classroom items for Bornhava throughout the month of March. These may include Play -Doh, large crayons, water-based paints, chubby paint brushes, bubbles, glue sticks and large chalk sticks.

To many people, Bornhava means "more" for their children with special needs and developmental disabilities. More attention. More caring. More progress. More success. More love. More hope for a brighter future.

Greetings from the newly created [Resource Enhancement task-force at UUCB!](#)



We are a group of members who have been seeking out and applying for grants to benefit our Church! We are newly formed and have just been officially recognized by the Board. There are some large grants that prompted the development of this task-force, such as the National Fund for Sacred Spaces. There are also small grants, like the Marvin Lunenfeld beautification grant for our gardens! We will keep in touch with the Congregation about the progress of these applications as they unfold. If you would like more information or would like to join our efforts please contact Bridget Evans <mailto:bae812@gmail.com> or Molly Quackenbush molly.quackenbush@outlook.com

Pulpit Flowers



In an effort to save the planet, we are asking those who purchase flowers going forward to consider **NOT** taking home the plastic pot the arrangement is in. After the service the flowers will be removed from the pot and placed in a large plastic bag. This will make it easier to carry the flowers home, as we encourage those who pay for the flowers to get more enjoyment from their purchase.

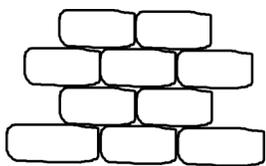
The florist will re-use the pots, cutting down on our consumption of plastic. If you purchased flowers in the past, you could return the pot(s) to Sandra Bissontz or Ted Bieniek.

If you still want to take home the entire arrangement, pot and all, that's OK too. We will ask you after that particular service if you would like to return the pot for re-use. We welcome your feedback.

Sandra Bissontz email: smp1127@yahoo.com.



Memorial Pathway



Orders for paver inscriptions in the Memorial Pathway are processed only once a year. They are due by May 7, 2023. It seems like a long time away, but you will miss it if you keep putting off ordering. Inscriptions may be one, two, or three lines long. Each line may have up to 14 letters and spaces. One or two I's allows one more letter per I. The cost of the paver is \$150 each. Ashes may be submitted for placement in the Memorial Garden at no cost, or for an offering of \$100 directly under the inscribed paver. Submit text and checks to the office made out to UUCB and the word paver in the For or Memo line. Any questions call Tony Keller at 716-860-0984 or kelleranthony290@gmail.com.

“To Everything There is a Season”

By Bobby Withrow, President

In 1959, Pete Seeger wrote his song, “Turn, Turn, Turn.” I like the song both as a song and for its message. To me, the message is more than a plea for world peace. It’s about the natural ebb and flow of life. There is a time and a place for everything.

In the life of a church, just as in the life of a person, there are periods of death and life, sorrow and joy. There are times of rejoicing and grieving.

With the announcement of Reverend Joan Montagnes’ retirement, we all experienced profound and strong emotions. This is perfectly normal and expected; our minister is going to be leaving us. I’m sure we also have a lot of questions, with the biggest one: What comes next?

What comes next is a time of reflection, introspection, and searching during a period of interim ministry. We will call an interim minister to help us find answers to bigger questions about ourselves as a congregation. After that, we will find a new settled minister to guide us and to minister to us.

There will be a time for us to celebrate Joan before her departure. There will also be a time for us to grieve her departure. We will be there for each other and for Joan as well because that’s what we do. We support each other in times of change.

Over the next few months, you will be hearing from me and other members of the Board of Trustees about this time of transition. Many of us have been through this before. With our institutional knowledge and support from the UUA and our regional staff, we will enter this next phase of our church’s life with grace and fortitude.

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!

FINDING OUR CENTER SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS: Join Rev. Joan and DRE Jess on Tuesday evenings, 7:00-8:30, in the Alliance Room starting on February 7 to join in the work of the Article II Commission in finding and exploring the center of our faith and our beliefs. There will be six sessions – 2/7, 2/14, 2/21, 2/28, 3/7, 3/14. To register, please email Jess at jpond@buffalouu.org.

Women's Society Luncheon and Speaker



The UUWS luncheon program will take place on March 16 with speaker Mark Goldman, speaking on “Love and Life in Early 21st Century Buffalo”.

Tickets will go on sale after service on March 5th and 12th.

\$20 for members and \$25 for non-members. Appetizers at 11, speaker at 11:30 and lunch served at 12:30. Come and join the fun.

- - - Family Promise is having a fundraising meat raffle, Saturday, March 11th! - - -

Knights of Columbus
1530 Kenmore Ave, Buffalo
Doors Open at 5:30pm
First spin at 7:00pm



Individual Tickets \$10 pre-sale, \$12 at door
Tables of 10 are \$85 pre-sale, \$120 at door
Tickets include free beer, wine and soda!

Bring your own food. Costumes encouraged! Here is a link to the [website](#) for more info and to buy tickets.



We are excited to announce the launch of our milestone 5th Anniversary of the **Western New York Refugee Film Festival!** This season has a bit of everything: from an unlikely friendship between a Syrian Kurdish refugee and former member of the KKK, to a gay refugee from Uganda now living in Canada and grappling with his new-found freedom during the pandemic, to an Afghan filmmaker documenting on his cell phone the flight of his family on foot to Europe, and much more. **Please see trailers and bookmark the schedule page here: www.wnyrff.org** Our film festival is still **virtual and FREE!** If you are able to give, **donations** towards the vital work of Journey's End and to help us cover the costs of the festival are most welcome (suggested donation: \$100).

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!



Hearts & Hands

UUCB Fun & Fellowship Auction

(In-person and On-Line)

Sunday, April 23rd

The auction is the biggest fundraiser for the church. It's time to eat, learn and laugh together. This year we have set our goal at **\$14,000!** We can do it with your help! The auction not only insures that our programs will thrive, it offers important fellowship opportunities. It's time for each of us – and for each group that we are a part of - to think of a creative way to contribute! Donations of events, artwork, dinners, hikes, gift certificates, theme baskets, and culinary treats are welcomed!

We've set the date: The auction will be both on-line and in-person. The in-person event will be on **Sunday, April 23rd** before and after church. Stay tuned for details.

Be a Donor: Deadline for donations is **Sunday, April 9th**

Be a "Creative Force": Share your ideas for how to make the 2023 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

Covenant Group Ministry Sunday

Sunday, March 26th

Celebrating 20 years of Covenant Group Ministry

Join us for the Sunday morning service – “Creating Safe Sacred Space” – presented by UUCB’s Covenant group facilitators and members. We will share readings and personal reflections about the ways in which our Covenant groups create space for us to walk together toward the lives we each mean to lead, toward the world we mean to have a hand in shaping.

A Covenant group is one of few places – if not the only place -where we are truly listened to, where there is no pressure to be any more than who we are in that minute. Where we can share experiences openly and honestly knowing that we will collectively “hold” those shared experiences in the safe and trusting space that we create together.

Join us for a potluck dinner at 5:00 PM in the Parish Hall where you will enjoy the company of Covenant group members and others who are considering whether participation in a group is right for them. Together we will have the opportunity to participate in a mini-group experience.

Childcare will be provided.

For more information, and to register for the potluck, stop by the Covenant group Ministry table in the Parish Hall before and after church during the month March. For further details, e-mail covenant-groups@buffalouu.org or Juli Van Woert JVW61@aol.com.

A Covenant group may be just what you are looking for.

Communicating and Connecting at UUCB!

A list with descriptions of our communication channels. Check them out!

PUBLICATIONS

The E-Blast. E-mailed every week, usually on Friday, and provides brief, current news, announcements, and updates.

Submissions due by NOON on Wednesday. Send to office@buffalouu.org.

The Monthly Newsletter. More in-depth, published every month of the year. Here you'll find Rev. Joan's letter to the congregation, what's coming up in R.E./Adult Ed, and Music, along with news, events, announcements for the coming month (and beyond!).

Submissions due by the 15th of the preceding month (with some leeway, please let us know if you will be late). Send to newsletter@buffalouu.org.

To sign up for our newsletters above, go to <https://buffalouu.org/sign-up>

THE UUCB WEBSITE

- Learn about [who we are as UUs](#), and find answers to [FAQs](#).
- Read about our [Accessibility and UAIM Program](#), and who to contact for more info.
- [The current E-Blast](#) (which includes the Order of Service)
- [The Monthly Newsletter](#) (plus links to past Newsletters)
- Info on [Religious Education and Adult R.E.](#), how to [get involved](#), and become a [member and pay your pledge](#).
- [Sermons and Services](#) archive.

Please note: The tabs on the homepage contain info, make sure you click on them (not just the subtabs)

Questions? Comments? Concerns? Email us at website@buffalouu.org

OTHER WAYS TO CONNECT

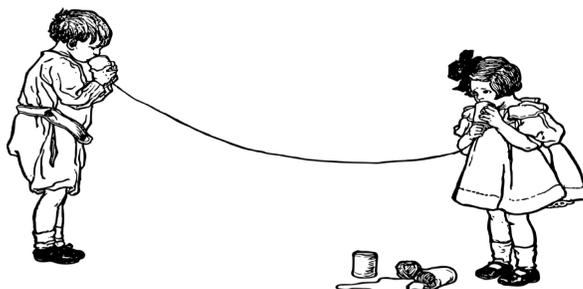
There is a "Who's Who" bulletin board in the Parish Hall that has photos of our Staff, Board of Directors, and Lay Pastoral Ministers.

Board of Trustees - You can be in touch with the BoT via email, attend board meetings in person or via Zoom, and see the Current Board of Trustees members on the website [HERE](#).

We have a **Religious Education/Welcome Table** in the Parish Hall on Sundays.

Announcements are made near the beginning of the church service on Sundays.

Facebook Pages for our Church in general [HERE](#), for Religious Education [HERE](#).



**We gather in loving community, inspiring one another,
to transform ourselves, to create a more just and
compassionate world**

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo

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<p>Minister: Rev. Joan Montagnes minister@buffalouu.org</p>	<p>Administrator of Facilities and Communication: Kaylan Ruiz office@buffalouu.org</p>	<p>Director of Religious Education: Jessica Pond jpond@buffalouu.org</p>	<p>Music Director: Dr. Jessie Downs jdowns@buffalouu.org</p>
<p>Care Network: Ginny Vaughan 716-768-1077 wixsonsg@gmail.com</p>	<p>Gatekeeper: Sara Kirkland office@buffalouu.org</p>	<p>Administrator for Finance: Donna Sentz donnasentz@buffalouu.org</p>	<p>Organist/ Accompanist: Chris Sierzchula</p>
<p>Nursery Care Coordinator: TBH</p>		<p>Monthly Newsletter (submissions due by the 15th) newsletter@buffalouu.org</p> <p>Weekly Announcements (E-Blast) (submissions due by NOON Wednesday) announcements@buffalouu.org</p>	



A chalice alit since 1831

A sanctuary on the National Registry of Historic Places

