

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF BUFFALO

September 2023 Newsletter

Gather - Inspire - Transform



Musings

Rev. Cathy Harrington, Interim Minister

What does it mean to be a people of Welcome?

UUCB is good at welcoming, after all I have felt very welcomed by your beautiful community over the past month. But September's Soul Matters theme of *Welcome* invites us to reframe the meaning of welcome from our prior understanding of "Widening our Embrace" or being "big-hearted", (as we hope to be as UU's), and instead focusing on becoming smaller. If we hope to welcome diversity into our community as white people, we may need "to shrink and de-center our voices" to make room for needs and preferences beyond our own. The interim period is the perfect time to reflect on a congregation's systems and habits and ask, "Are these procedures and systems that have worked well for so many years still serving the mission and vision of our church?"

It is normal for there to be a bit of anxiety during times of transition. The unknown is a time of potential and possibility but is also a time of discomfort, loss, and confusion. In transitional ministry we call it the neutral zone which can be unsettling. Change is rarely comfortable. The temptation is to get through it as unconsciously and fast as possible. "[The Parable of the Trapeze](#)" by Danaan Perry is a tool that transition ministers love to reference as we begin our interim work with congregations. But I highly recommend you also take time to watch the video of our former UUA President, Susan Frederick Gray's sermon from last year called, "Embracing Possibility in Times of Change." You can find it on the UUA website's collection of on-demand worship or with this link: <https://vimeo.com/773623494>. If you are interested in planning for a time to view it together, let me know (charrington@buffalouu.org). I'd love to organize a viewing with conversation one afternoon or evening soon.

We have a lot of work to do over the next two years, and I am asking you to breathe into the discomfort and trust the process. My first job is to get to know you better. I want to learn what brought you to this congregation, and what keeps you here. I want to know what you love about this church and what you'd like to keep.

This time of transition, this neutral zone can be a time of great joy, creativity, and fun. The *bread* for your journey over the next two years is to remember to breathe when uncertainty arises, to remember to trust the process, and to stop the need to "fix" and "do" for a time. Cultivate mindfulness and be gentle with yourself and one another.

In the beginning, I'll share some stories about my journey with its hills and valleys, challenges, and triumphs, and I will listen to your stories, your hopes, and dreams for this congregation and for your own lives. When we can begin to articulate who you are and where you hope to go, we will begin to put together an outline, a list of qualities and traits that you hope for in your new minister. This is a time of transition that has the promise to be "the most alive, most growth-filled, passionate, expansive moments in our lives" (Danaan Perry).

See you in church!

In faith,

Cathy

Pulpit Previews

September 3 ~ “Something to Believe In” by Rev. Cathy Harrington

Embarking on the spiritual journey is like getting into a very small boat and setting out on the ocean to search for unknown lands. - Pema Chodron

For my first sermon to you, I will begin at the beginning to help you know me and understand how my “small boat” led me to become a Unitarian Universalist minister. Following the service, you are invited to remain in the sanctuary to learn more about the interim process and about your important roles in the interim work as we embark on this new journey together.

September 10 ~ Ingathering Water Ceremony

A Unitarian Universalist tradition that began in Lansing Michigan in 1980 that marks the beginning of our new church year and is a celebration of reconnection. We bring water from the places of our lives, and the combined water is symbolic of our shared faith and diversity. Bring a small vial of water from a place (real or symbolic) that holds meaning to you so that we might mingle the waters of memories and hope in a communion ritual of solidarity and peace.

September 17 ~ “Walking Together” by Rev. Cathy Harrington

Walking Together is the title of a historical book on Unitarian polity written by Conrad Wright in which he poses the question from the Book of Amos: "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" Unitarian Universalists congregations do not cite a doctrine or a creed; what binds us together is our Covenant. Unitarian Universalism is a covenantal faith, and yes indeed, we can walk together in peace and love even when we don't agree. Covenant is Latin for “come together” and it means promise or agreement. Covenants are used to set guidelines for creating a beloved community that is safe, caring, hopeful, loving and respectful of differing views. This sermon will introduce a process for creating a covenant together that will be more meaningful because of your participation.

September 24 ~ “Holy Heresy” by Rev. Cathy Harrington

We UU's are proud of our heretical faith. Ours is a heretical faith, it is a free faith, and the ground on which we stand was made holy by our forbearers. This sermon explores our rich and inspiring heritage with humor, gratitude, and deep reverence. UU minister, Richard Gilbert, author *The Prophetic Imperative* asks the question, “Do we merit the wind we inherit?” For decades we have been defined by what we don't believe in. Now more than ever is the time to find ways to spread the good news our life-giving, life-saving faith.



Religious Education & Faith Development News



Greetings from the Religious Education Ministry!

Jess Pond, Director of Religious Education

Hello UUCB!

Have you ever wanted to teach a religious education class? Now is your chance! We still need a few teachers, especially for the following age groups and classes:

Grades 4 & 5 will be learning about the values that Unitarian Universalists find important, like integrity, courage, and love, and how those values serve as tools to help us live our lives and build a covenanted community

Grades 6 & 7 will be interacting with social justice in different ways, using various media to introduce different issues, and learning how to become justice-makers themselves, with the opportunity for hands-on involvement

Youth Group (Grades 8-12) will be learning leadership and community-building skills by coming together and figuring out what is most important to them in their spiritual community, with the opportunity to create their own program around the group's special interests

If you're interested in teaching any of these topics, working with any of these age groups, or in working with any of the younger classes, please let me know!

We also need a few more trained volunteers to be able to bring back the Our Whole Lives comprehensive sexuality education program for three age groups: grades 1-3, 4-6, and 7-9. The training is a total of 20 hours, and costs for the training are covered by UUCB. Registration for an online training for the elementary school levels closes on September 5. Parents can't teach their own children in OWL, but let's create the village that teaches each other's kids!

I am also working on forming two ministry teams for next year: Adult Faith Development, and Religious Education for children, youth, and parents. Would you like to see more faith development programming for adults? Talk to me about joining the Adult Faith Development Ministry Team! Would you like to help with special programming for kids and parents, including potlucks and party planning? Talk to me about the Religious Education Ministry Team!

As always, feel free to reach out to me with any questions or thoughts about Religious Education for any age group at jpond@buffalouu.org.

Bright blessings,

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 Faith Development



UUCB Banned Book Club with Mary Lou and Sharon

Starting Wed., Oct., 4, we will be meeting the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month in the Marge Gardner Room, from 7:00 pm-8:30pm.

Our picks for 23-24: **Oct.**, Kurt Vonnegut, *Cat's Cradle*; **Nov.**, Jodi Picoult, *Nineteen Minutes*; **Dec.**, break; **Jan. 2024**, James Baldwin, *Go Tell It On The Mountain*; **Feb.**, Alex Hailey and Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*; **Mar.**, Patricia McCormick, *Sold*; **Apr.**, Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*; **May**, Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*.

"Burning Books" is graciously giving "banned book club members" a discount on our monthly reads. Just let the staff know that you are a part of the UU Church Banned Book Club. Another source is [thriftbooks.com](https://www.thriftbooks.com) which is reported to be a great source for "cheap" books.

All are welcome and you can join us at any time. For more information, contact Mary Lou Hill and Sharon Walker at uucbbbc@buffalouu.org or DRE Jess Pond at jpond@buffalouu.org.

Also, this year's [Banned Books Week](#) is Oct 1-7, 2023, an annual event celebrating the freedom to read! This year's theme is "Let Freedom Read!"

And here are some excerpts from an ABC GMA3 interview with author Jodi Picoult, March 27, 2023:

"...According to a new report from the American Library Association, attempted book banning and restrictions at school and public libraries [set a record in 2022](#), with more than 1,200 challenges — nearly double the total from 2021.

Florida passed a new law last year to review reading materials made available in classrooms, and the state's Martin County recently announced the removal of 92 books from its schools.

Twenty of those books were written by bestselling author Jodi Picoult. She sat down with ABC News' Gio Benitez and Kayna Whitworth on "GMA3" to discuss what happened to her books in Martin County and what she believes is driving book bans nationwide...

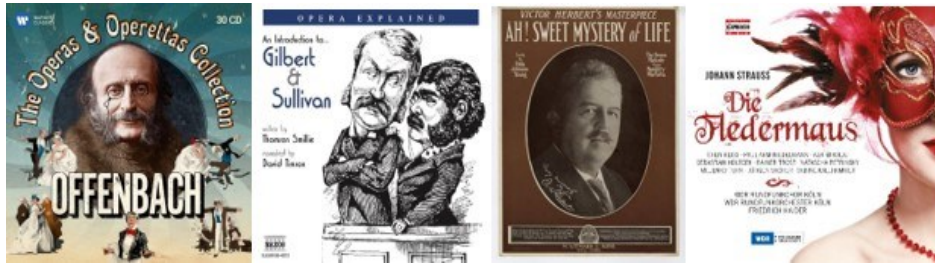
GIO BENITEZ: *So I want to show this moment from last week. This was at a Martin County school board meeting. And this is a 100-year-old World War II widow, and she spoke out against these book bans. OK. The moment went viral. So let's go ahead and take a look at that:*

100-year-old WWII widow: "One of the freedoms that the Nazis crushed was the freedom to read the books they banned. They stopped the free press, banned and burned books. The freedom to read, which is protected by the First Amendment, is our essential right and duty of our democracy."

BENITEZ: *It is just chilling to hear that. Jodi, what is your reaction when you hear that?*

PICOULT: *That I wish she didn't have to fight this battle, that we shouldn't have to relive history all over again, that it's OK for a parent to decide whether or not a book is appropriate for their own child, but it's not appropriate for that same parent to make the decision for your child..."*





TWO HEARTS IN ¾ TIME: THE WORLD OF OPERETTA



MICHAEL HARRIS, INSTRUCTOR

Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo
 695 Elmwood Avenue; Buffalo, NY 14222
 14 Meetings; Wednesdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
 September 6 to December 13, 2023
 Cost: \$75 for 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 Avenue; Buffalo, NY 14222. [Put 'Operetta Course' on memo line of check.] For information, call 716-885-2136, or email us at office@buffalouu.org.

TWO HEARTS IN ¾ TIME: THE WORLD OF OPERETTA

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the language of love was theatrically expressed by the operetta. It was the vehicle not just for high romance, but also for social satire & extravagant fantasy. We will salute the great melodic geniuses of the operetta form, including Jacques Offenbach, Arthur Sullivan (with W.S. Gilbert), Johann Strauss II, Victor Herbert and Sigmund Romberg. Each class will leave you with a song in your heart!

Course Syllabus

- Session One (September 6): Overture – Ancestors of Operetta (English Ballad Opera and German *Singspiel*)
- Session Two (Sept. 13): Satirizing France's Second Empire – Jacques Offenbach
- Session Three (Sept. 20): *Offenbachiade* – Rivals and Followers [Hervé, Charles Lecocq and André Messager]
- Session Four (Sept. 27): Vienna's Golden Age of Operetta -- Franz von Suppé and Johann Strauss II
- Session Five (October 4): Vienna's Silver Age – Karl Millöcker, Oscar Straus
- Session Six (October 11): Lands of Smiles – Franz Léhar, Emmerich Kálmán
- Session Seven (Oct. 18): A Source of Innocent Merriment – The Partnership of Arthur Sullivan and W.S. Gilbert
- Session Eight (Oct. 25): If Love Were All – Titans of English Operetta (Noël Coward and Ivor Novello)
- Session Nine (November 1): Oh Promise Me – Early American Operetta (John Philip Sousa and Reginald De Koven)
- November 8 – No Class Session!!**
- Session Ten (November 15): Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life – Irish-American Operetta Master: Victor Herbert
- Session Eleven (Nov. 22): When I'm Calling You – Rudolf Friml
- Session Twelve (Nov. 29): Lover, Come Back to Me – Sigmund Romberg
- Session Thirteen (December 6): And This Is My Beloved – Robert Wright and George Forrest
- Session Fourteen (December 13): Exit Music – Operetta's Last Gasp (Candide, She Loves Me, A Little Night Music & On the Twentieth Century)

Music Notes, Dr. Jessie Downs, Music Director



Music-based Adult Faith Development Classes



As a reminder, Music Director Dr. Jessie Downs and her husband Dr. Alex Huddleston will be co-teaching a new course entitled Musicianship 101, with hopes of starting on Wednesday September 6th 5-6pm in the Alliance Room with a 10-student minimum. If you're interested or want more information, please contact jdowns@buffalouu.org. Topics covered will include music reading; piano usage; understanding basic organizing principles of melody, harmony, and rhythm; vocal technique; and putting all these skills into practice in group music-making settings.

Bass Soloist Michael Harris is also offering the latest in his ongoing series of informative classes - "Two Hearts in $\frac{3}{4}$ Time" focused on the music of Operetta (see details under R.E. Adult Education). Michael hopes that diving into the comedy and romance of this lighthearted genre will be a welcome respite from the chaos of our modern world. Michael's class will also begin on Wednesday September 6th 9:30am-11:30am online, and those interested can contact Michael at mharris@buffalouu.org.

Save the date for Fall MUUSIC Weekend!

Although it's still a while away, it's never too early to save the dates for our very exciting Fall Music Weekend which this year is titled "Prayers for Peace – concerts in solidarity with the people of Ukraine." The kick-off event will be Friday evening November 17th 7:30-9:30pm at our church. This concert will feature a variety of music by Ukrainian composers, sung by the UUCB Choir, UB Choir, Mriya Ukrainian Women's Choir, and St. Nicholas Church Choir and will be open to the public. Come out to learn about Ukrainian culture through music, stories, and food! There will be a repeat performance of the concert at UB on Saturday November 18th, as well as a very special Music Sunday on November 19th with a sermon about the history of the War in Ukraine and how we can support the Ukrainian's fight for freedom.

September Music at UUCB

The month of September kicks off with an exciting service on 9/3/23 that will help us to get to know our new minister, Rev. Cathy Harington! Since we will be getting to hear her story, the service will begin with "If You Knew My Story," performed by the HoUUse Band and featuring our new tenor soloist Shaun Doyle. At the Offertory, Jessie and Taryn will sing the Indigo Girls classic about searching for faith and meaning, "Closer to Fine" - recently featured in the Barbie movie. As the Reflection, Bass Soloist Michael Harris will sing the moving "When You Believe" about the tenuous yet powerful nature of belief, drawing on the story of the Israelites in the desert. Finally, pianist Chris Sierzchula will close out the service with a meditative piece by Greek-Armenian spiritual teacher G. I. Gurdjieff and Russian composer Thomas de Hartmann.

9/10/23 will be this year's in-gathering Water Communion for which the Music Ministry will provide a variety of watery wonders. As the Prelude, Chris will perform Claude Debussy's "The Sunken Cathedral" to welcome us back into our sacred space. As the Centering, the UUCB Choir will perform an arrangement of "Shenandoah" and at the Offertory they will share Benjamin Britten's "Time and Concord," both traditional Water Communion choral offerings. As the Reflection, Soprano Soloist Taryn Goehrig will sing the moving spiritual "Deep River." As the Postlude, Alto Soloist Helen Lowry will sing the folksy favorite "Swimming to the Other Side" by Pat Humphries of Emma's Revolution.

On Saturday 9/16 at 2pm, UUCB is thrilled to welcome Buffalo's newest young adult choir Incipio into our space to debut their breakout vocal jazz group. Their program – entitled "Cheek to Cheek" will feature arrangements of tunes by Billy Joel, Michael Jackson, Kirby Shaw, the Real Group, k-os, and more. Incipio is co-directed by soprano Julia Anne Cordani, who has sung as a guest with the UUCB Choir on multiple occasions and co-directs the opera collective Sotto Voce with Music Director Jessie Downs. Come out to support Julia and her amazing troupe of young singers!

On Sunday 9/17, the theme of both the sermon and the music is "Walking Together." The service will open with a Moses Hogan arrangement of the traditional spiritual "Walk Together Children," performed by the UUCB Chamber Choir. At the Offertory, Shaun and Mike will share the meaningful "You Walk With Me" and as the Reflection, Mike will share the sweet "Not While I'm Around" - both music theatre favorites about being with and for one another. For the Postlude, the UUCB Chamber Choir will share a choral arrangement of "You'll Never Walk Alone" from the classic musical Carousel.

Finally, on September 24th, Our music will feature numbers by Bob Dylan, Jason Shelton, Leonard Cohen, and Ysaye M. Barnwell - performed by the UUCB Choir and Soloists.

September Share-the-Plate: [Fantastic Friends of WNY](#)



A non-profit, volunteer driven social organization for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Teens and adults have a great time at events and programs, socializing and making friends. Parents are able to enjoy respite or socialize with other parents during programs.

The special needs center is located in Depew and some center activities include bingo, arts and crafts, dance nights, science and garden clubs, baking, Kitchen Life Skills and respite. In addition to center programs, we offer a variety of special events held at various handicapped accessible locations throughout Western New York. For more information: <https://fantasticfriendswny.org/> or fantasticfriendswny@gmail.com.

Social Justice Ministry

The Social Justice Ministry team selects Share the Plate recipients each month and coordinates various related activities, such as cleaning the waterways on Earth Day, touring some of our partners (e.g., Providence Farm), and providing Christmas gifts for homeless families. On September 7, we are serving dinner at Friends of Night People (394 Hudson) from 4:45-7:15 pm and invite you to join us.

All are welcome to suggest Share the Plate recipients to us – most of these ideas come from parishioners – and to participate in our social justice activities. We also welcome additional members to our team. We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 6:30-8:00 pm. Please contact Maria Testa at marial-testa@gmail.com if you have Share the Plate ideas, are interested in joining our team, or would like to serve dinner on September 7.

You can also help FoNP by attending their Party for the People on September 19 – Chef Patrick’s yummy food, beer, and music for only \$25 [Party for the People Ticket Order Form | Friends of Night People](#). We invite you to live your UU values while having fun at the same time!

Pulpit Flowers



To remember a loved one or recognize the hard work and efforts of our UU family, flowers make a perfect tribute. Lots of Sundays are available for ordering Pulpit Flowers. Please consider reserving a date to schedule your floral tribute soon. For \$50 you can share beautiful fresh flowers with the congregation and take home a fragrant arrangement.

We are asking those who purchase flowers 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. 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. Just contact Sandra Bissontz at smp1127@yahoo.com to place your order, or if you have any questions .

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, unless it's an Executive Meeting): <https://uuma.zoom.us/j/97736244745>. (If attending via Zoom, please email the board in advance)
- To view Current Board of Trustees members click here: [Governance](#).

Announcements, Events and Opportunities, Oh My!



UAIM NEWS

Universal Access & Inclusion Team is Partnering with GLYS (Gay, Lesbians, Youth Service), Center for Self Advocacy, SANYS & PrideAbility who are sponsoring an afternoon of games for Disabled GLYBTQ, GLYBTQ and anyone else who loves to play games.

Saturday Game Mashup-Connect and Intersect, Ages from 12-120!

DATE: **Saturday, September 23, 2023**

TIME: **2-4pm**

WHERE: **Universalist Unitarian Church of Buffalo, 695 Elmwood Ave,**

GAMES GALORE: Gay Bingo, D&D, and many more games!! POPCORN, WATER, & TREATS WILL BE FREE!!

Witness to Injustice: Unraveling Historic Native and U.S. Relations

We have rescheduled Buffalo Nekanehsakt's KAIROS Blanket Exercise for Saturday November 4, 2023 from 12pm to 3pm in UUCB's **Parish Hall** at 695 Elmwood Avenue. Everyone is welcome!

Reconciliation through education and understanding: this is a participatory history lesson that fosters truth, understanding and respect among indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. Participants walk on blankets representing the land and explore the role of First Nations peoples by reading scrolls and carrying cards which ultimately determine their outcome as they literally 'walk' through situations that include pre-contact, treaty-making, colonization and resistance. We engage in a conversation about the European colonization of Turtle Island (the Western Hemisphere) in order to deepen our understanding of the denial of Indigenous peoples' nationhood throughout U.S. History.

There is a sliding scale of \$10-\$30 to support our indigenous facilitators. Our workshop will be similar to the one shown here <https://vimeo.com/129161339>

Please [RSVP here](#) or reach out to Hy Carrel at hcarrel@gmail.com or (716) 259-2725

WBFO Promotion

If you think promoting UUCB through spot announcements WBFO was a good idea, here's your chance to put your money where your opinions are. Mark your donations "WBFO Promotion" and all of WBFO's listening audience will hear what this church has to offer, thanks to your generosity. Have a listen to the [June 26th WBFO broadcast](#), in case you missed it!

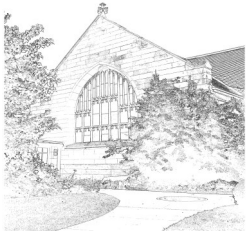


Three films remaining: September, October, December at the Western New York Refugee Film Festival! Please see trailers and bookmark the schedule page here: www.wnyrff.org Our film festival is still **virtual and FREE!** If you are able to give, **donations** towards the vital work of Journey's End and to help us cover the costs of the festival are most welcome!

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



The Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo,
695 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, New York 14222
716-885-2136, www.buffalouu.org

<p>Interim Minister: Rev. Dr. Cathy Harrington 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>Pastoral Care & Support 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

