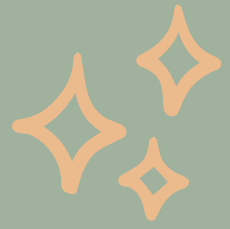


www.buffalouu.org

UUCB Newsletter July 2024



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

“Carry the Light Forward” is glowing brightly!

Even though the official launch of our Capital Campaign is set for mid-September, our team has received plenty of very generous early gifts. Our recent financial feasibility study told us to expect a great deal of support from our Church leaders and they have delivered! We have heard about people’s excitement, their willingness to lend a hand, and to get creative and give generously in this early phase of the campaign. Thank you! Stay tuned for future updates! Questions? Please reach out to Bridget Evans or Phil Nicolai. We are always happy to talk!



Board Updates



We are doing a lot of wonderful work towards our future. When I open the newspaper, I am reminded of what a fortunate circumstance it is to have the grants we've been able to receive, the fundraising towards maintaining our beautiful building, our absolutely magnetic music ministry, and our vibrant community. We are alive. I am filled with gratitude when I think about who we are and what we are doing. There's never been a perfect group of people, and we're unlikely to be the first. We do not have to be. We have almost two hundred years of collective labor that shows how people working together can create a very beautiful community.

The Board's recent work has been focused on creating some clarity in processes that we think may serve the church better in the future. Policy is one such effort. The Caring For People task force is looking at safety policies – talk to Bill Parke for more. We have clarified a building use policy that didn't make it clear who had ultimate decision-making (now: the minister). The Governance committee is looking into creating a cash-handling policy. The Governance Committee has been extremely helpful in finding solutions that work with our values and governance, and the Board is very grateful!

Music is part of the mission of this church. Our relationship with Sotto Voce reached a point that younger people would recognize as “define the relationship” – a need to discern the boundaries around our closeness and be intentional about what we are. We are formalizing our affiliation with Sotto Voce, creating a special use agreement and contract that we think will benefit both entities. It will be revisited every year – if we didn't get it right, we can revise. Feel free to approach a member of the Board, Rev. Cathy, or Dr. Jessie Downs if you're curious about the nitty-gritty details.

The big picture is this: Sotto Voce gets some use of the church for rehearsal space, and there are flexibilities built-in. If emergent needs arise, the church can reclaim the space to fulfill them. But on days we'd otherwise have an empty room, we'll be helping to incubate opera. Thank you to the Sotto Voce leadership for their many patient conversations with us. Thank you to the people in the congregation who shared their joys, hopes, and concerns with us. These helped us discern what needed to be decided. The Board is excited to continue UUCB's mission and honor our history of supporting musical arts through this affiliation. Some may recall that the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus was similarly supported in its infancy as well, as its initial arts director was former Music Director Barbara Wagner.

Lastly – the budget. The Congregation approved a budget that had a built-in deficit. Making our office administrator full-time was an investment in our future. The hope was that this would create administrative capacity to rent the building and generate new revenue, as well as ministerial activities (weddings, mainly). Right now, our revenue has exceeded our expenses. This is partially due to increases in fundraising (for instance: the Service Auction is continuing to be extremely successful, Cabaret raised more than they have before, and there have been some incredibly generous donors). We have booked weddings! The money in the collection plate has been bountiful. Your generosity continues to power our church.

The largest portion of our financial support continues to be pledges. Thank you to everyone who generously pledged, and are steadying their commitments. On average, it costs \$1,744 a day to operate our church. Your support is needed and deeply appreciated. Your support is being used to create something lovely: our thriving community.

This church is a monument to generosity, dreams, and effort. Every worship service, every fun event, every plant in the garden, every repair made or planned for, everything is because someone or somebodies thought it up and then even more people dedicated their time, energy, and resources to making it just so. This church is so lovely because our community has made a commitment that it should be, and we continue to fulfill it in so many ways. Thank you for being so generous with your time and treasure.



Minister's Musings

Dear Ones,

Article II passed at General Assembly. You can read more about it by following the link below:

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/uua-article-ii-passes-general-assembly-result-unitarian-universalism-bylaws-vote-values-statement>

In faith and love,

Cathy





Our Covenant



OUR JOURNEY TO COVENANT

First, thank you to past and present members of our access and inclusion ministry team Lynn Mancuso, Sophia Roberts, and Susan Dolce. With special thanks to Ginny Vaughan and Steve Wixson who have seen the process from start to finish. The writing team of Rev. Joan Montagnes, Leslie Bodt, Mary Richert, and Fran Manly. Our interim Rev. Cathy Harrington, Liz Parke, Mary Lou Hill, and Kate Bell-Schwede. Thank you to all of us who participated in Zoom sessions during the shutdown, members who took part in the listening circles this year, and all who participated in the values in May.

The covenant you chose through ranked-choice voting on June 10th was one of three: one that was drafted back in 2021, an adaptation from another UU church, and one that came out of our most recent writing group. All address your values that came from our Zoom sessions during the pandemic, the brainstorming after church, and in several of the listening circles that took place this past winter.

Ranked-choice voting, though new to UUCB has been used by the UUA at General Assembly, and it went very well.

The Respectful Relations Team (Ginny Vaughan, Steve Wixson, Liz Parke and Sharon Walker)

Our Covenant

We, the members and friends of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo, beginning with ourselves as we are, covenant together in love to

Celebrate and find joy in our diversity,

Honor our history and heritage while staying open to the future,

Be generous with our time and our treasure,

Strive for truth and justice within and beyond our congregation,

Relate to all who come here with kindness, respect and compassion,

Learn from one another, and

Honor the sacred in all its expressions.

When we fail, we will acknowledge our shortcomings,

make amends as we can, give and seek forgiveness,

and move forward again in love and community.

July 7: Getting It Wrong Can Be About Doing It Better

Some stories empower us, and some hold us back. The “original” stories about who we are often change as we change, whether personally or communally. The person that I thought I was a while back, and the reasons I gave for becoming that person, no longer describe me or explain me today. The same can be said for two of my cultures – both Jewish and American cultures change and evolve, and we have to update our ideas about them to change and evolve too. We might offer ourselves grace as we rethink which of our stories better represent who we want to be.

Rabbi Jonathan Freirich continues to work in service and justice spaces, facilitating conversations and connections aimed at change and progress for everyone, and writes about it all on a Times of Israel blog. After a career as a Jewish communal leader, Rabbi Jonathan now works with multi-faith and multi-ethnic communities to create sustainable efforts for supporting initiatives for young people, multi-group dialogues that make a real difference, and healing encounters between people from different backgrounds. A multi-media activist, speaker, and teacher, a recipient of awards for bridge-building, Rabbi Jonathan engages in a life of work for repair, restoration, and celebration in partnership with his spouse Ginny and their two children Jude and Sadie, here in Buffalo, New York. A lover of books, television, movies, and the outdoors, Rabbi Jonathan will try most things at least once and often runs for fitness.

July 14: Giving Grace

Once upon a time, I was unexpectedly and undeservedly given the gift of a word that describes me--Grace. The transformative journey to reconcile my inner narrative with the world's gaze has helped me understand how to give grace to others, without expectation.

July 21: Finding Ourselves Anew

We learn to think of ourselves as unified—oneself, living a series of experiences, one unified narrative. How does such an understanding aid our growth, or stymie it? Wherein is there a possibility for transformation and change? We explore these questions today with the help of many songs performed by alto soloist Helen Lowry, piano accompanist Chris Sierzchula, and members of the UUCB House Band Paul Zanolli and Steve Rao.

July 28: How the Light Gets In

We all know our world is not perfect, not on any level. Even we ourselves are not perfect, no matter how hard we try. So imperfection is simply a fact of life—but is it a feature or a bug? Leonard Cohen's song “Anthem” suggests that it's actually a feature: “There is a crack in everything; that's how the light gets in.” Singer, songwriter, and guitarist Doug Yeomans will join me for this service as we explore this seeming paradox in words and music.

Greetings from Religious Education



Register for Religious Education Classes

Religious Education Calendar

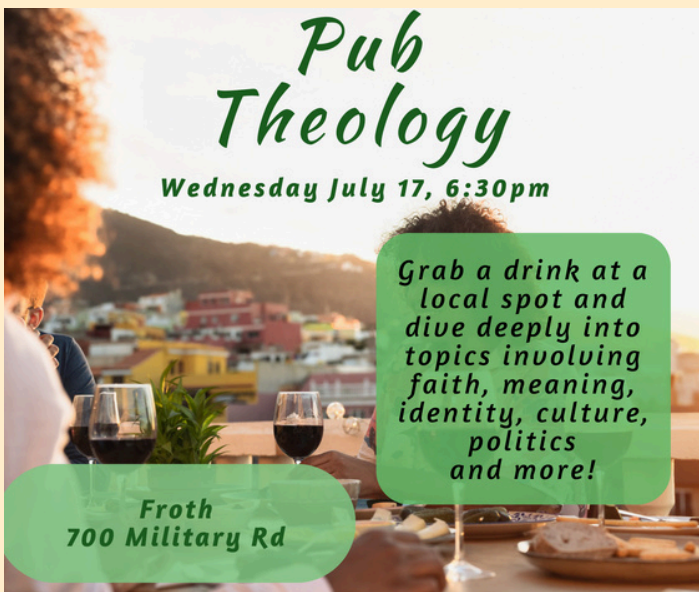
Register for Religious Education 2024-2025 here:

<https://forms.gle/y6r3YTw62uteHCto6>

Check out the Lifespan Religious Education Calendar here:

<https://buffalouu.org/religious-education>

Choose YOUR RE Sunday in 2024-2025! Sign up to help teach religious education classes here: <https://shorturl.at/GFEpk>



UUCB Banned Book Club with Mary Lou and Sharon

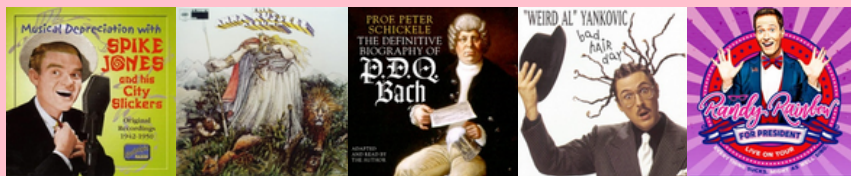


The 23/24 season has come to a close.

Look for us at our NEW day and time in the fall. Beginning in September, we will be meeting on the 4th Saturday of each month at 10:00 am in the Marge Gardner Room. Look for the notice Brown Bag Breakfast Banned Book Club in upcoming "e-blasts" and newsletters for more information in the next few months.

Our first book discussion will be *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe, Saturday morning September 28th. On October 26 and November 23, we will be discussing *The Absolutely True Story of the Part-time Indian* by Sherman Alexi and *1984* by Sinclair Lewis.

For more information, contact Mary Lou Hill and Sharon Walker at uucbbbc@buffalouu.org or DRE Jess Pond at jpond@buffalouu.org.



SOMETHING FUNNY GOING ON!: A HYSTERICAL HISTORY OF MUSICAL HUMOR MICHAEL HARRIS, INSTRUCTOR

SOMETHING FUNNY GOING ON!—The Silly Syllabus

Session One (May 8): Classical (and Neo-Classical) Laughs (Haydn, Mozart, Rossini, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, etc.)

Session Two (May 15): Divertissement! – French Musical Humor (Saint-Saëns, Debussy, Satie, Poulenc, Ibert)

Session Three: (May 22): Musical Depreciation – Spike Jones and His City Slickers

Session Four (May 29): Connoisseurs of Comic Music – Gerard Hoffnung and Dr. Demento

Session Five (June 5): Pranksters at the Piano – Victor Borge, Igudesman & Joo

Session Six (June 12): "I'm Not Making This Up, You Know!" – British Musical Wit (Anna Russell, Flanders & Swann)

Session Seven (June 19): The Nutty Math Professor – Tom Lehrer; Jonathan and Darlene Edwards

Session Eight (June 26): Decomposing the Classics – P.D.Q. Bach/Peter Schickele

Session Nine (July 10): Parodies and Polkas – "Weird Al" Yankovic

Session Ten (July 17): Be Our Guest – Christopher Guest's Cinematic Musical Satires (This Is Spinal Tap, Waiting for Guffman, A Mighty Wind)

Session Eleven (July 24): Forbidden!-- Gerald Alessandrini and Other Theatrical Satirists (Forbidden Broadway, The Drowsy Chaperone, The Musical of Musicals)

Session Twelve (July 31): Song Parody as Political Weapon – Mark Russell, Capitol Steps, Randy Rainbow

This course celebrates the masters of musical satire, parody and buffoonery, including Victor Borge, Spike Jones, Anna Russell, Tom Lehrer, P.D.Q. Bach and "Weird Al" Yankovic. We'll meet on Zoom, with the option for in-person sessions at UUCB. To register, [click here](#) or send your check (made payable to UUCB) to Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo; 695 Elmwood Ave; Buffalo, NY 14222. [Put 'Something Funny' on memo line of check.] For info, call 716-885-2136, or email: office@buffalouu.org.

Music Notes

Dr. Jessie Downs, Music Director



The month of July will feature a wide variety of music, offered up by a combination of music staff and volunteers in collaboration with several guest speakers.

On **July 7th**, Shaun Doyle, Paul Zanolli, and Phil Nicolai will support Rabbi Jonathan's service with music that speaks to "how the Civil War might be regarded as the conflict that forged our America." Music will include "Battle Hymn of the Republic" as the Offertory and "Two Brothers" as the Reflection, with piano Prelude and Postlude selections from Phil.

On **July 14th**, Julie Taylor will lead another of her inventive services accompanied by music from the output of British new wave band Depeche Mode. Come hear Michael Harris and Christopher Sierzchula's unique takes on "Personal Jesus," "Enjoy the Silence," "Sacred," and "Somebody" - understated rockers that contain original spiritual perspectives.

This month's Casual Concert is **Saturday, July 20th at 2pm** and will feature Ravi Padmanabha and David Mussen. This recently formed duo encompasses a newfound musical language, combining the artists' years of experience with various musical styles. Through the use of gongs, crystal bowls, tabla, hand pan, clarinet, and ocean drums, they create a full musical journey that traverses ambient meditation to ecstatic trance music.

On **July 21st**, join mother and daughter team Rev. Rita Capezzi and Helen Lowry for a musically full service. Helen will be joined by Christopher Sierzchula on piano, Paul Zanolli on guitar, Steve Rao on drums, and Jessie Downs on backup vocals. As the Prelude, Helen and Paul will share "Testimony" by Ferron, a moody and powerful song about personal faith. As a special Centering, Helen and Chris will perform "O Mio babbino caro" by Giacomo Puccini, an operatic classic that speaks to how being sure of what we want and who we are is an important part of growing up... even when we're wrong. The soulful and contemplative "Alphie" by Burt Bacharach will serve as the Offertory and the Musical Meditation will be the mellow and ethereal "Every Death" by Johanna Warren. Things will end on a cheery note with the whole band performing "Make Your Own Kind of Music" by Mamma Cass Eliott as the Postlude.

On **July 28th**, we welcome back our much-awaited summer service team of Fran Manly and Doug Yeomans for a morning centered on Leonard Cohen's "Anthem." While "Anthem" will accompany the sermon itself - reminding us that "There is a crack in everything/ That's how the light gets in," - we will also be treated to a variety of other selections sung and played by Doug, with support from Jessie and Chris. The service will begin in a contemplative mood with "Bayou Blues," a Doug Yeomans original. Cohen's best-known song - "Hallelujah" - will serve as the Offertory, both lifting up the side of the relationship that is dark and broken and ending with a triumphant hallelujah that transcends that brokenness. The classic country ballad "Always on my Mind" - a heartfelt plea for "one more chance" from a lover who is all too aware of his failings - will serve as the Reflection. Closing out our monthly theme of "Grace" will be the apt "Amazing Grace" as the Postlude.

Music Events

Ravi Padmanabha and David Mussen Saturday, July 20th at 2pm

Ravi Padmanabha and David Mussen have played music for many years in various groups. The recently formed duo encompasses a new found musical language . The musicians have combined years of various musical styles into the duo. They use Gongs, crystal bowls, tabla, hand pan, clarinet, and ocean drum to create a full musical experience. They create a musical journey that traverses ambient meditation to ecstatic trance music.



Other ways to support UUCB!

Did you know you can support UUCB by purchasing things you already buy?



Save your receipts from Dash's Market and bring them to the office. For every \$1,000 in receipts, we receive \$25 from Dash's.

*We have Bison tickets for sale!
The all-UUCB night: 8/9/24 at 7:05pm
or general admission, both for \$16*



WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!

We're excited to announce two volunteer opportunities at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo! We're in need of volunteers for the upcoming Garden Walk and our newly revived Dance Alive series. Your help will be crucial in making these events successful and enjoyable for all attendees. Please sign up using the links below:

[Garden Walk Volunteer Sign-Up](#)
[Dance Alive Volunteer Sign-Up](#)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND DEDICATION!



RAISE SOME DOUGH

Help support us!
25% of sales will benefit

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF BUFFALO
July 11, 2024
4:00 pm to 8:00 pm EDT
765 Elmwood Avenue
Buffalo, NY

In Cafe • Drive-Thru • Pick-Up • Delivery
Enter promo code FUND4U at online checkout.

Panera
FUNDRAISING

*Eat at Panera on
July 11th*

*from 4-8pm at the
Panera on ELMWOOD*

Making a Difference at UUCB

GREETINGS FROM THE "CARE FOR PEOPLE" ADVISORY TASK FORCE!

As our Church's newly adopted Covenant guides us forward in community and love, the Board of Trustees wants to ensure the Church is taking action to make people feel safe and welcome. Examples of this intentional work include: focusing on accessibility when planning events, making sure we respond with compassion and honesty when addressing disruptive behavior, and creating a culture of open communication about safety.

To ensure this work is uniting the perspectives of the many different people who comprise our beloved community, if you have a suggestion or question you would like to see answered as the Task Force does this work, please send it to:

UUCBCareForPeopleBillP@gmail.com. You may also talk with Task Force Members:

- Stephanie Adams
- Richard Leimbach
- Bill Parke
- Peter Sloan
- Jess Pond
- Jim Sheibley

Example questions include: How do we report threats or harassment? How do we share a concern about a tripping hazard? How do we center the well-being of those a safety concern has impacted? When a matter is resolved, how do we process that resolution as a community (no "code of silence")? We won't have all the answers right away, but over the coming year (and years), this input will inform our Church's answers. Thank you!



SHARE THE PLATE

OPENBUFFALO

In July, we support Open Buffalo as a share-the-plate partner.

Our mission is to advance racial, economic, and ecological justice. We do so through skill building, network connecting, and activating leadership opportunities. Our goal is for all communities in Western New York to thrive free from discrimination and poverty. At Open Buffalo, we believe our role is to create an empowered democratic society by training individuals in how to identify problems and create solutions in public policy and public systems. We accomplish this through two categories of programming: Leadership Development and Advocacy & Organizing.

Ongoing Activities

Pulpit Flowers

Come join the list of UU congregants who have shared beautiful floral arrangements at our Sunday services. We are so thankful to them for adding a touch of Nature's beauty, while honoring a loved one, or simply offering their generous support to make our space more inspiring.

For \$50, you can purchase flowers for our pulpit. You can take them home after the service, or donate them to a local hospital.

Please contact Sandra Bissontz email: smp1127@yahoo.com

Tuesday Morning Coffee Klatch

Paul Zanolli hosts a Tuesday Morning Coffee Klatch each week from 10am to 11am. Coffee and tea are available at the church. No program, no agenda, just a time to get together with good company.

Pastoral Care & Support Ministry Team

We are the Ministry Team that sends cards to members/friends who are experiencing joy, concern, or sorrow. We also write cards twice a year to members/friends who cannot attend service or social events for various reasons. Some of our members have moved to be closer to their families but enjoy receiving cards from UUCB. If you would enjoy being part of the team or would like more information contact Ginny Vaughan at wixsonsg@gmail.com.

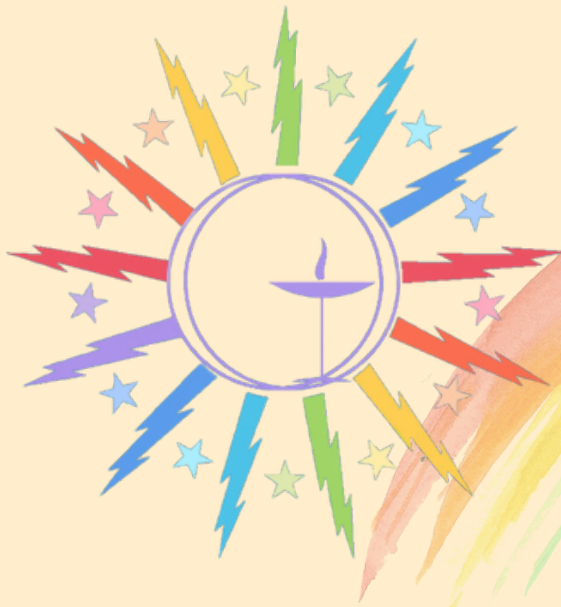
Gathering of Grievors

There is a Gathering of Grievors that meets regularly on the second Sunday of the month. We meet in the Marge Gardner Room (next to the kitchen) at noon. We welcome anyone who is grieving the loss of a loved one because we know that grief needs to be shared. For more info, contact Bonnie Collins at 716-867-9628.

WBFO Promotion

If you think promoting UUCB through spot announcements on WBFO was a good idea, here's your chance to put your money where your opinions are. Last year, our promotions of Dido and Aeneas and Prayers for Peace ushered 100s of people into our space. Over the next month, we hope to run a new ad promoting both UUCB more generally and our musical offerings more specifically - highlighting the upcoming performances of Mozart's The Magic Flute. In addition to hosting the performances of the opera, we are also working in conjunction with Sotto Voce to extend the church's educational outreach by holding a free open dress rehearsal for local high school students. We hope that these ads will draw many people to our website and into our building to see that we are truly "the church of what's happening now." Mark your donations "WBFO Promotion" and all of WBFO's listening audience will hear what this church has to offer, thanks to your generosity.

**Check out the UUCB Calendar here for more at
www.buffalouu.org/calendar**



*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

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Music Director

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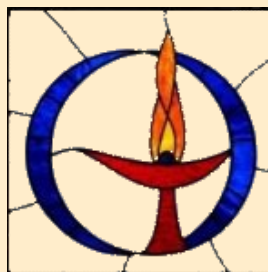
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Pastoral Care & Support Network

Ginny Vaughn
716-768-1077
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Organist/Accompanist

Chris Sierzchula

A chalice alit since 1831

A sanctuary on the National Registry of Historic Places