



# Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo

In the freedom of truth, and the spirit of Love, We unite for the worship of the Holy,  
And for the service of humanity

## June 2012

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## Margret's Musings – *The people God trusts?*

One of the little “inside jokes” I heard when I first joined a UU church was that “we are the people God trusts enough to let us close down churches over the summer, knowing we will come back in the fall.”

In the 1800's, when many of our churches were founded, our society was substantially rural, and entire families worked the fields around the clock in the summer to plant, cultivate and harvest the crops. In those years before air conditioning and sanitation systems, city dwellers who could afford it would head out to the mountains or seashore, seeking cooler, cleaner places to spend the time of heat, flies and noxious odors. Under those conditions, it made sense to operate our churches on a 10-month schedule, accommodating the economic and cultural patterns of society.

How much sense do those patterns make in this millenium, in a society that runs 24/7 all year around? This church has a rich tradition of lay-led worship while the minister takes some time off in July and August, and we have great volunteers providing the music and pastoral prayer for Sunday services. I have heard from several members that they first visited the church in the summer, and they liked those services well enough to come back for more. But it may take more than just a good Sunday sermon to keep this church vital and welcoming when the weather grows warm.

How do first-time visitors see the church on a summer Sunday – is there a membership greeter at the door to show them the ropes? Do people make a special effort to say hello during the coffee hour and tell them about the church? And if they arrive with children, is there something interesting for the kids to do while the adults are in the service? How do they find out that we provide nursery care for the youngest ones, even in the summer? Does someone tell them that our Covenant Groups continue to meet over the summer, and about other activities they might find welcoming?

This interim time is a great opportunity to think in new ways about what it means to be a leadership church for our movement in this vital urban setting. This is a good time to consider new possibilities, and how best this historic church may become a church for the future. It is so good to be with you – See you in church!

*Margret*

**Sonja Jensen, DRE**

***News From Religious Education.***

What a bittersweet time the end of the church year is. It is such a relief to take a break after the culmination of our school year commitments. But it is sad to know that many of our young people are leaving for college and it may be a long time before we see some of them again. But, summer in Buffalo is a beautiful thing and Elmwood Village certainly comes alive.

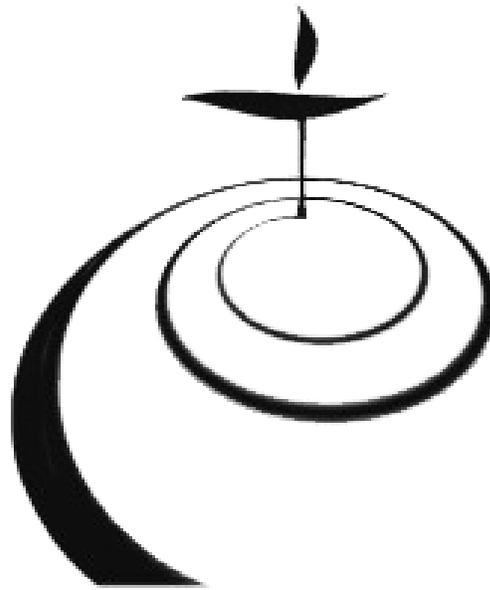
Summer is such a strange time for Unitarian Universalists. Perhaps it is a legacy of many of our church leaders being academics, but we tend to follow the academic year. Even when programming has been available at church for children participation has been sparse. But it is a long time between May and September. That is a full quarter of the year; June, July, August plus another almost half month when you count the end of May and the beginning of September.

A full season is a long time to be away from community. So this year we will try a few new things. We will try to have someone at church to welcome new families every week. And I'll let you know when special events are happening that may have real appeal for children and youth. We will also have some community field trips and picnics over the summer; Informal opportunities to come together so that the kids can see each other and enjoy the direct experience of wonder that nature provides. Please be sure to join the UUCB RE Facebook page. As we set them up each event will be posted there.

For starters, The Buffalo Pride Parade is on June 3. This is a family event! Whether you or your children are Gay, Lesbian, Straight, Bisexual, Pansexual, Asexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, or just prefer to leave labels out of the conversation, we can attend in support of the many people who are still fighting for the right to love whomever they will. This is a first principle issue; the inherent worth and dignity of every person. I was concerned about how small our marching contingent was last compared to the size of our congregation until I realized that we had people peppered all through the parade in various organizations. I would love it if everyone who was participating could share on the Facebook event page from UUCB Pride Parade so that we get a stronger sense of how many of you do come out to support this important event. For those who wish to join me, I plan to have sign making material available at the church on June 3 so that kids can make signs to carry with their families.

In addition on June 10 there will be a Flower Communion. This is one of the most relevant rituals of our faith, but sadly our children are too often on to summer activities and rarely get to experience it at UUCB. This is a lovely event for children and adults. In fact the ritual was designed with children in mind. You can read more about it's history here: <http://www.uua.org/documents/zottolireginald/flowercommunion.pdf>.

I hope to have opportunities to speak with all of you this summer about what you desire in your RE program. Give me a call to set up a time to talk about the hopes your family brings.



## Talking Points From The Board

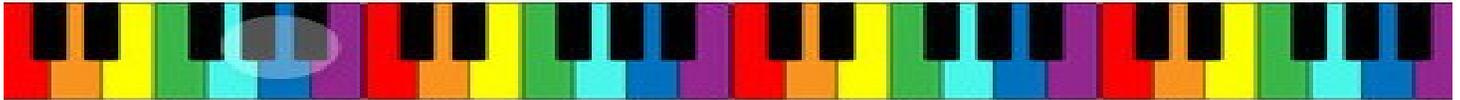
There are many changes around the church these days, but for one of the most important, we can be grateful for getting a long notice. In April the Board received a letter from Maestra Barbara Wagner letting us know that her last month of service to the Church will be August, 2013. We want to express our heartfelt thanks for the years of beautiful music she has introduced us to. In September 2012 the Church will host a celebration of her 50 years of ministering to us with music – everyone is invited, details to follow. We will never be able to replace her, but we will have a full year to make a good plan to maintain the fine quality of the music program that Barbara has built in the church.

This month we have new phones and a new phone system in the office. When you call the church number, you now get a message that allows you go directly to the extension of the person you want to reach. If they're not there, you can leave a voice mail message that just they will be able to retrieve (and that is even forwarded to their e-mail!). The new system also provides basic information about the church location, service hours, and other commonly asked questions, saving Josh hours of time in taking messages and responding to routine inquiries.

The Board has formed a Policy Working Group to identify and gather the policies we have developed over the years, to refine and expand on them where necessary and to publish them in a single location where they can be kept current and can be referred to by anyone who has a question about procedure(s).

A big Thank You! to all the hardworking volunteers who converged on the church with their buckets and brooms on two different dates, performing a much-needed clean-up in various parts of the building. And special thanks to Janet Massaro who coordinated the cleaning of the Sanctuary.

On Saturday, June 9, from 9am to 1pm, the Board will be joining other church members, taking the stories that were related in March and April and producing a mission statement that reflects our hopes, dreams and aspirations. Join us and be part of the next stage in the process. Call the office to let them know you're coming so we make room for you!



## Music Notes

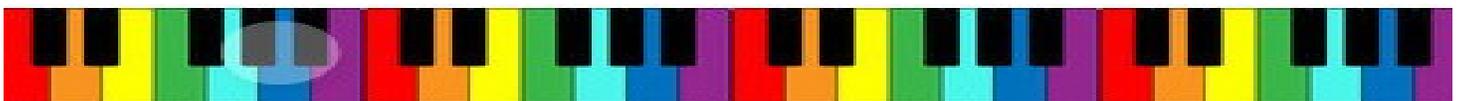
Visions of sugar plums, Madrid, Barcelona, the Alhambra and hopes of visiting the spot near Toledo where El Greco painted the *View of Toledo*, and Gaudi's *La Sagrada Familia* and so much more, are dancing in my head. In 2 days my dear friend Deanne O'Day and I are leaving for Spain and even a day in Morocco. I'm so grateful that I've lived long enough to finally see the country that I've been wanting to visit for years. The art, architecture, music, glorious, towering cathedrals, the architecture left behind by the Moors and all of the colors of the country and the language have always intrigued me.

There will be lots of music while we're gone, led by Jenn, Monica, Phil Nicolai and the choir (see last month's music notes) Thank you my amazing and talented musicians. When we return, it will be to the strains of *Gracias A La Vida* (thanks be to the life that has given me so much) by Violeta Parra a brilliant songwriter and activist who grew up in politically oppressed Chile. This song has been embraced for years by many of the great singers of the world, including Joan Baez. It was recorded in 2010 by Canadian Michael Buble and other artists as a fundraiser for Chilean earthquake relief. A new setting of the *Stabat Mater* by Memley will also be included in the May 27th service. May both of these intense works help us to remember those whose lives were taken through violence. The first Sunday in June is Pride Day and you can believe that I'll find some great music to help us celebrate Pride, especially this year with 'don't ask, don't tell' finally over and same sex marriage finally here.

One of them will definitely be *Ritmo*, again a song sung in Spanish praising the joys of love, dance and song. It's a great number. Flower Communion will be the choir's last Sunday for the season.

We wish you all a happy healthy Summer and send you our love and thanks for all you do to support the music of this church.

With love from the Choir and Barb.



## **Chalice Lighters Issue a Call for Contributions to Help the UUCB**

The St. Lawrence District Chalice Lighters program has designated the proceeds from the current “call for contributions” to help our church hire a half-time Membership Coordinator. The description that came out with that request for donations reads:

UUCB is a vibrant and diverse church within a vibrant and diverse urban community, and we have much to celebrate. We are a Welcoming Congregation, providing spiritual sanctuary, support, and advocacy to our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender members, friends, and neighbors. Our members come from a wide range of socio-economic, educational, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. Our Religious Education program is large and expanding, with about 60 children in attendance on any given Sunday, supported by dedicated volunteer teachers, our full-time Lifespan Director of Religious Education and a staffed nursery to care for our youngest ones. We place a high priority on making our loving congregation and historic building accessible and welcoming to all.

Like many Unitarian Universalist congregations, we have strengths upon which to build, and we are committed to create a vibrant stewardship in order to match the liveliness of our church and our community. We wish to deepen the spiritual experiences of our congregation; we wish to offer more opportunities to express our desire for social justice; we wish to welcome into our congregation more seekers of free religious expression.

This is an exciting time, full of momentous changes at UUCB, as we begin a deep process of self-examination and renewal during a crucial interim period between settled ministers. We as a congregation have a new sense of ownership of our congregation, and have seen a rising feeling of hope, energy and possibility as we go forward into our future.

We know our value as a church, and we want both to clearly articulate that value to our current membership and to make that value even more visible in our larger community. We want to strengthen our internal ties to one another even as we seek to expand those ties outward to include more members of our community. We think at this time we can best achieve our vision for strengthened connection with the addition of a paid half-time Membership Coordinator.

This support for the new position will be a big help in making our congregation more inviting,



welcoming and involving for prospective and new members. The UUCB Long Range Plan identifies as a priority the establishment of a paid Membership Coordinator position to revitalize our membership initiatives and to coordinate with the other areas of the church to provide a clear and meaningful path to membership. The Membership Coordinator will manage and implement all programs to welcome visitors, to provide a path to membership, to integrate new members and newcomers into the church community, and to support leadership development. The Membership Coordinator will provide staff support to the Membership Committee and work closely with the Minister and Director of Religious Education as well as the Church Administrator to ensure that programs effectively meet the goals of the Long Range Plan of the church.

The 2012 operating budget of the church has funds designated toward this new position, and we plan to hire someone in the fall. The Chalice Lighters support will enable us to make this staff expansion and thus enable us to build upon the strengths that make UUCB a vital home for all spiritual seekers. A warm thank-you to all our members who signed up to be Chalice Lighters, because you are helping make this dream a reality! And if you did not sign up and are feeling left out, there is still time to do so. Just pick up a blue form at the Chalice Lighters table in the Parish Hall after the service, and either leave it with us to send in, or send it in yourself.

## Social Justice Information and Calendar

PRIDE PARADE is JUNE 3RD!!!!!! MARRIAGE EQUALITY IS HERE IN NEW YORK! Soooo, bring your mothers, your sisters, your friends and dogs, your sons, your fathers in wheel chairs, your babies in strollers and walk in the Pride Parade. You could even join in as it passes UUCB!!

Line up is at noon between West Delevan and Laffayette on Elmwood with step-off at 1pm.

IF YOU'VE NEVER MARCHED IN THE PARADE BEFORE, IF YOU ALWAYS DO OR IF YOU'RE SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN, THIS YEAR IS THE YEAR! LET'S HAVE THE LARGEST SHOWING EVER FROM UUCB!!

As a Social Justice fundraiser, John Marohn and Christopher Sierzchula will be performing works of Fauré, Schubert, Donaudy, Handel, Copeland, and Vaughn Williams on Sunday, June 10 at 7 pm in the UUCB Sanctuary. Suggested Donation: \$10 for adults; \$5 for students

Occupy: Western New York is having Teach-ins at various places in the Region. Join in when you can. They are trying to create a new paradigm which is difficult but exciting work. Find them online.

General Assembly will be in Phoenix from June 20 to 25. Jean Ott, Bill Gardner, Marge Gardner and Ellen Moomaw will be voting delegates, there on your behalf. Support them by coming to John's concert on June 10th and/or giving to the kitty at the Social Justice table after the service on Sunday mornings. Thank you for your support!

Because of the Pride Parade, we will have no June Meeting. Thanks for a great year - See you in Fall! - Consider joining in some of our many opportunities.

Ellen Moomaw, Chair  
652-1608, ellenmoomaw@gmail.com



## Women's Society

Many, many thanks to Paulette Notaro and Kathy Kubala for arranging a simply wonderful day at Niagara on the Lake. *Ragtime* was exciting and fascinating, and the missed pre-show chat turned into a glass of wine in the posh members' lounge, so all is well. Thanks again, for making all the arrangements.

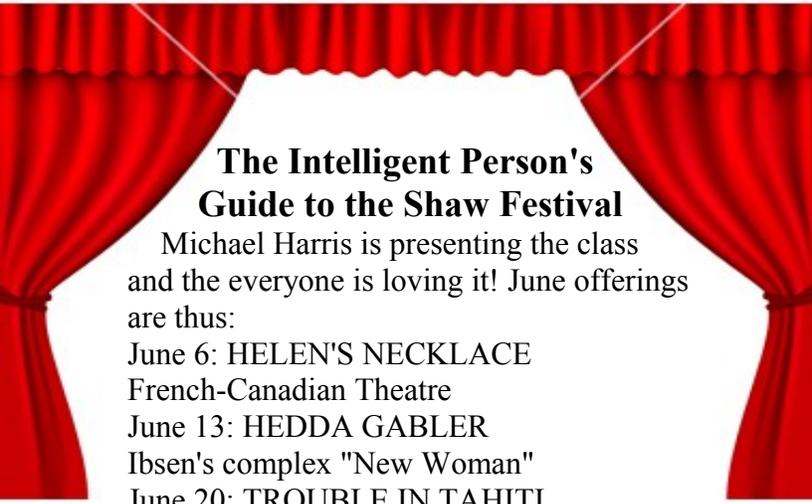
June brings us to another "field trip". On June 21, we will visit the Theodore Roosevelt House on Delaware Avenue. The carriage house is completed and it's eye-popping! We will enjoy lunch there and a tour of the facility. It will be a good day.

Arrangements can be made by signing up in the Parish Hall on the 2 Sundays prior to June 21. Only paid reservations may be taken because we must pay the TR site in advance. The \$25 fee includes admission and lunch. If you are already a member, the \$7 admission fee is waived. Please join us for the last event in our program year. It's been a good one.

The pew cushions are ordered and the fabric is being milled as this is written. A prototype is available for viewing in the first pew on the right as you look at the front of the church. We are re-using the horsehair/ hoghair mix that is on the cushions now. It's sustainable, and still has "cushy" quality after more than 60 years. (We can't determine how old they are, but we do know that no one we've asked remembers any different cushions). By fall, the whole sanctuary will have a new look! Thanks to all the members and friends who helped earn the more than \$30,000 to pay for this improvement, and the whole congregation who bought the books and the baked goods and helped in our other projects.

We were delighted to help celebrate the ordination of Michelle Buhite. Thanks to many volunteers, but special kudos to Nancy Thomas and Cathy Pietrzak for helping Judy Danforth organize the reception. It was lovely.





## The Intelligent Person's Guide to the Shaw Festival

Michael Harris is presenting the class and the everyone is loving it! June offerings are thus:

June 6: HELEN'S NECKLACE

French-Canadian Theatre

June 13: HEDDA GABLER

Ibsen's complex "New Woman"

June 20: TROUBLE IN TAHITI

words and music by Leonard Bernstein

June 27: HIS GIRL FRIDAY based on the play The Front Page

Each class is \$10, or the whole course of 11 plays is \$70. The first class is free, so please come and check it out.....with no obligation!

We meet at 9:30 AM in the Alliance Room on Wednesday mornings. Good coffee awaits. See you there!



## Family Promise

Many thanks to our volunteers who continue to do a great job in keeping Family Promise possible at UUCB. Special thanks to Celeste Brinkman who was able to facilitate a new to us refrigerator which we really needed. We will be hosts for Family Promise during the week of June 8th to June 15th. We are one of 15 churches participating in this program which serves homeless families in our area. We provide meals, overnight space, and generally good fellowship during their time with us. It has been a great opportunity to get to know each other as we give of ourselves. Can you help? Prepare a meal, stay overnight, spend some time? Please contact [familypromise@buffalouu.org](mailto:familypromise@buffalouu.org) to volunteer or with any questions.

## Fun & Fellowship Auction November 4.

Mark your calendars! It's not too early to start thinking about this fun(d) raising event, scheduled for Sunday November 4, 2012, before and after church. Last year's event raised over \$7000 for the church budget and we'd like to increase that this year. We need planners, helpers, donations of dinners, services, social events of all kinds, and plenty of bidders. Want to join the fun? Contact Maria Testa at [mariatesta@roadrunner.com](mailto:mariatesta@roadrunner.com)

## Pulpit Flowers Ministry

We are now accepting Pulpit Flower tributes, memorials and dedications for the September 2012 through August 2013 program year. Please email [pulpitflowers@buffalouu.org](mailto:pulpitflowers@buffalouu.org), call 886-9122, or stop by the Parish Hall table for more information.

Pulpit Flowers June Schedule:

June 3rd: Tracey Kassman

June 10th: Judy Kieffer

June 17th: Jeanne Heinl

June 24th: Lawrence Congdon

Available July Dates: 8th, 22nd, and 29th.

Please remember to send your check for \$35.00 to the church office before your reserved Sunday, payable to UUCB with "Pulpit Flowers" in the memo line. Your dedication text should be sent to [pulpitflowers@buffalouu.org](mailto:pulpitflowers@buffalouu.org).



## Covenant Groups

### keep meeting in the summer!

Were you thinking about joining a covenant group, but just didn't have time a few months ago? Summer is a great time for catching up with all your goals. A covenant group is where you can share your feelings about what it means to be a UU while discussing spiritual growth, trust, patience, meditation, forgiveness, peace, love, joy and other topics with some of the closest friends you'll make. You might even learn about some great places to eat ice cream. Contact Francis Montgomery at [franciscssf@villa.edu](mailto:franciscssf@villa.edu) to make the connection.

## **Fiscal Fitness Thursdays**

Through the cooperation of its Board, Staff, and Congregation, the UUCB is exploring new ways of promoting spirituality through responsible and transparent fiscal policy and practice. For the period of Interim Ministry, the Church has asked the Treasurer to coordinate three "working groups" to contribute to the major aspects of this work.

The group meets on the First Thursday of the month; the Endowment Working Group meets on the Second Thursday; the Finance Working Group meets on the Fourth Thursday. All meetings run from 5-6pm, and take place at the UUCB.

Any active Member of the congregation can come to one or all of our "Fiscal Fitness" Thursdays, but to ensure we can plan a productive meeting, please send a notice to [uucbtreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:uucbtreasurer@gmail.com) to let us know you're coming!

**Audit Working Group** meets on the first Thursday: (June 7, July 5, August 2, Sept 6, Oct 4, Nov 1, Dec 6)

**Endowment Working Group** meets on the second Thursday: (June 14, July 12, August 9, September 13, October 11, November 8, December 13)

**An open Fiscal Fitness working** night will be held on the third Thursday of the month. This is a standing meeting to be used as needed for various fiscal matters. (June 21, July 19, August 16, September 20, October 18, November 15, December 20)

**The Finance Working Group** meets on the fourth Thursday: (May 24, June 28, July 26, August 23, September 27, October 25, November 22, December 27)

## **June Worship Service Schedule**

**Sunday, June 3, 11:00 am**

**Pride -- Rev. Margret A. O'Neill**

The theme for Western New York's Pride 2012 festival is "Transformation." We celebrate progress even as we continue to work toward transformation in social attitudes toward people of all gender identities, around the country and around the world. Wear your rainbow colors, and we will proceed to the Pride Parade following the service.

**Sunday, June 10, 11:00 am**

**We Are a Bouquet -- Rev. Margret A. O'Neill**

As the flowers in a bouquet bring their variety to create more beauty than any of them could achieve alone, so on this day we come together to celebrate unity in diversity, to dedicate a child, to welcome new church members and celebrate the beauty we create together. Please bring a flower to share in our annual flower exchange.

**Sunday, June 17, 10:00 am**

**Family -- Rev. Margret A. O'Neill**

Father's Day provides yet another opportunity to consider how we are all parents to all children, siblings to one another. In an era of "family values" we affirm once again that all families have value, and that our universal kinship has many layers of powerful meaning.

**Sunday, June 24, 10:00 am**

**18th century Deism and the Modern UU -- William Wolfers**

The ideas of Diderot and Helvetius strongly influenced both Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, and thus some of the formative ideas of our government. How does the Deistic belief, that there is a spiritual force behind the origin of the Universe, continue to shape our thinking about the Divine and human nature?