



March 2019

The Beacon

Sunday Services— start at 10:30 a.m. and last
approximately 60-75 minutes
Theme for March: Finding the Positive



Unitarian
Universalist
Congregation of
Erie

March 3 *Our Erie: A Story of Hope and Determination and
Participation in History*

Speaker: Ben Speggen (biography on page 5)

Grit. Determination. Fortitude. A willingness to look back to see more clearly ahead. A desire to participate in history. No doubt, our Erie has faced great adversity, but Erie residents are working toward a bright future. And outsiders are taking note: "There are so many elements in place to help this town move forward," Deborah Fallows, co-author of *Our Towns: A 100,000-Mile Journey into the Heart of America*, said of Erie. "It's not just a dream, but it's a dream with steps along the way that are actually being realized and taken." "We don't need to travel farther than Erie, Pennsylvania, to see that grand things are possible and that cities can leverage their distinctive advantages," wrote Bruce Katz and co-author, the late Jeremy Nowak, wrote in *The New Localism*. There is still much canvas to adorn, much open water to sail, faces to reveal, and growth to foster. For one another, for future generations, for Erie, we proudly proclaim, this is Our Erie.

March 10 *Flowers in the Ruins*
Reverend Charlie Dieterich

Finding hope in the worst of circumstances is an expression of faith. Let's ask what the role of roses in winter really is and how community can help us find the positive together. Jackson plays.

March 17 *At Least There Are No Snakes*
Reverend Charlie Dieterich

It's St. Patrick's Day, but it's also the end of winter, and, this being Erie, it will probably be snowing. Let's talk about compromise and perfectionism, and celebrating the small victories of life. With Jackson and the Choir!

March 24 *East Africa: A Study in Positive Thinking*
Speaker: Kelly Armor

Kelly Armor likes to say she went to study traditional music in East Africa because she was "a frustrated classical flute player looking for an alternative." She lived with families in Kenya and Tanzania from 1986-1988 and learned the songs, culture, and the Swahili language. She and her husband just spent the month of February reuniting with families she has kept in contact with for generations. Join us as Kelly talks and sings about the robust generosity, abundant hope, and positive development she recently witnessed.

March 31 *It's Not as Bad as You Think*
Speaker: Pastor Chuck Cammarata (Biography on page 5)

The 24/7 barrage of news from more outlets than we can count, of almost exclusively bad news, assaults our outlooks on life so that we end up thinking about and looking for the bad, the dark, and the frightening. But, believe it or not, there is good stuff happening in our world. There is reason for hope, and maybe, even (banish the thought) optimism. This talk will give us a chance to look at the other side of the equation.

Minister:
Reverend Charlie Dieterich

President:
Doug Russell

UUCE Board Secretary:
John Galle-Boyko

UUCE Board Members:
Mary Beth McCarthy
Julie Maguire
Melanie Hetzel-Riggin
Ron Brown
Wendy Ormond

Mission

INSPIRE, CONNECT, ACT
We are a vibrant and inclusive religious community.

We:

- **INSPIRE personal and spiritual growth;*
- **CONNECT in fellowship and service;*
- **ACT for peace and justice.*

Vision

We will:

- **Share the wisdom of our guiding principles and nurture all who come seeking personal and spiritual growth.*
- **Be a welcoming, inclusive, and expanding religious congregation with diverse ideas and beliefs reflected in our services and programs.*
- **Establish ourselves as a strong presence in the region through greater community engagement.*

Covenant

We:

- **Covenant to promote a culture of compassion and acceptance in our relations with each other.*
- **Promise to listen with the intent to understand and to communicate in an honest and respectful manner, even when we disagree.*
- **Acknowledge that conflict is an opportunity for growth.*

Minister's Musings

When I interviewed for the job of minister one year ago this month, I had to ask myself... why Erie? (Other people asked me the same question, so it was good that I got a head start.) There are bigger cities, there are warmer cities, there are certainly bigger congregations- so why Erie?

I suppose life is like that. As we grow up people ask: Why would you want to go out for that sport? Why would you want to do that after high school? What do you see in them? Why stay (or go?) Career, housing, car, clothing... everything is subject to criticism, and it seems that somebody will oblige by doing just that. And speaking of that somebody, "Why do you hang out with that person?" The simplest answer is best: "Because I like them." Though "Because she is my mother" is also popular. In our life choices, there is a tension between optimizing expected joy, and doing what feels right – and finding unexpected joy!

While Robert Frost's poem about stopping somewhere on a snowy evening is probably his most appropriate poem for Erie, his other poem about the Road Not Taken, where the author makes a decision to follow a less popular path forward-- that's the poem I like.

Do you make decisions based on facts alone? Or do you sit with the alternatives and then see which one speaks to you (metaphorically?) I know that's how folks will adopt pets at the shelter. None are perfect, but one tugs at your heart strings, and you can't NOT take it home. I have a friend who adopted a three legged cat. And one who adopted an abused dog. Joy comes from the most unexpected places.

Now I'm not saying that UUCE is a three-legged congregation. It is a group of smart, creative people who have gone through some challenges with ministers. I want to be a happy and healthy minister here, and I'm glad you want that too. I am thrilled to see the congregation's inner strength come out, it's sense of curiosity and hope. It is the type of congregation I want to be a part of, a congregation with potential and activity.

Looking for ways to get involved? One possibility is to become a Sunday service assistant, or you can suggest a topic for a Summer Lite Service. We are looking for more service assistants and coordinators, as well as hospitality, ushering and technology!

Our March theme is, "Finding the Positive." Let's do it together: March Meal Madness and the Spring Equinox! I will offer a workshop on Membership Processes Saturday morning March 9. All are welcome as we talk through a common way UU congregations welcome Guests and follow them through membership, and then consider what makes sense for Erie. 9:30 AM to before 1 PM. Sign up via Facebook, or on a sign-up list. Check the weekend e-news for more information

In addition to the all-congregation workshop, you are invited to spend a peaceful hour reflecting on aspects of our monthly theme at our Friday morning Spiritual Reflection, March 15 at 10:30 in my office.

And March is the time to plan summer activities... Spokane UU General Assembly in June and Ohio's CER Summer Institute (<http://www.cersi.uu.org>) in July.

Peace and warmth,
Rev Charlie



President's Ponderings

I am wondering if any participants of the Minister Start Up or non-participants are interested in the written observations contained on the twelve sheets? I've had two people come forward and express interest. Anyone else? I have transposed the large sheets into digital word files. I think it is important that these be discussed within groups, so that the flavor of what was expressed is debated and considered. There are some interesting observations and suggestions. Consider this part of the work that could point towards the future of the UUCE.

How important are the committees? They are struggling to retain leaders to direct their functions. Membership, greeting visitors and welcoming them as guests, eventually assisting the minister and congregation in a possible path to membership. Hospitality provides a recognizable moment for interaction, conversation during Social Hour. Congregants have stepped forward to perform four of the six responsibilities/tasks of the Hospitality Committee. A few of the committees, with numerous members, are guiding the committee functions without a chairperson/ leader. Email has supplemented face to face meetings as has Zoom, a software, web-based, virtual meeting space. We minister to each other through our efforts when gathered together at the tasks of committee work. I recently noticed in conversation that the word "committee" causes adverse reactions. Maybe this is a good time to look into the Covenant and the Mission statements that the congregation, with Mary Desmone's guidance, produced five years ago. Maybe using the term "team", or some equivalent, needs to be explored.

On February 24, the Congregational Meeting followed the Sunday Service at noon. This mid-year report on the health of the Congregation was attended by 26 congregants. The Garage Sale survey results were presented by Lynne Stephens and discussed. The Garage Sale will be held and more information will be forthcoming. Melanie Hetzel-Riggin lead an explanation and discussion pertaining to the troubles of filling leadership rolls of the committees, as well as the unfinished business of exploring the congregation's wants and needs as part of our anticipation of part or full-time ministry or possibly something in between. Watch for information soon.

How about joining one of the Little Dinners? They are a great way of getting to know your fellow congregants. Breaking bread and conversation. Thirty years ago I attended several Little Dinners. Think I brought store bought bake goods, I'm a warmer not a cook. Made lasting friends and came to realize why I like the UUCE. It's because of the people who populate the UUCE. Always amazed in the number of different reason members gravitated to the UUCE and their varied interests.

Peace,

Doug

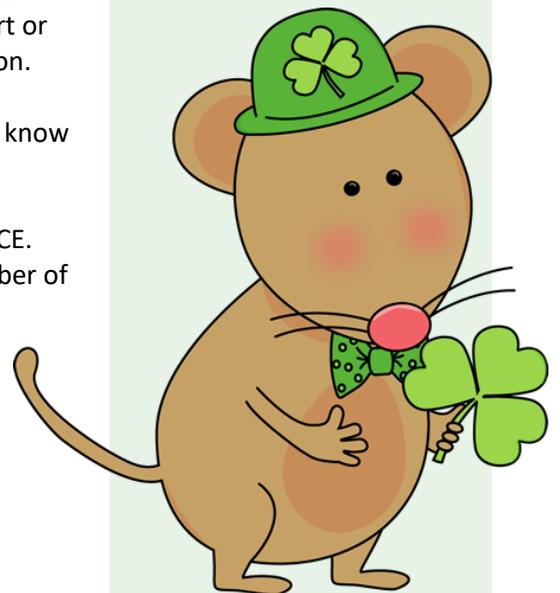
March Book Club

We will meet March 27 at 7 p.m. at Edie Cultu's home (456-5406).

Book:

Let's Pretend This Never Happened

by Jenny Lawson





During the congregational meeting held Sunday, February 24, our members agreed to continue the annual garage sale. This year, the sale will occur on June 14 and 15, with setup beginning Sunday, June 9 after the service.

We have multiple ideas for making the work lighter and spread among more people, and for getting the remnants distributed more efficiently.

Details to follow as they become available.

Notes From the RE Chalkboard

Extra! Extra!

As we are getting closer to the end of the school year, I'm sending this "Extra News" report to all parents and teachers to update you on changes and exciting end of the year events.

TEEN PROGRAM

Based upon parent feedback and staffing changes, we will not be finishing the 7 Habits program. The teachers have prepared lessons to round out the end of the year. The teens will meet this upcoming Sunday and continue to meet first and third Sundays for March, April and May.

Teens and Elementary Age Programs

Earth Day Service

Earth Day Multigenerational Service will be held on April 28. There will be 3 RE classes devoted to the preparation: March 31, April 7, and April 14. I ask that all children (elementary and teen), who wish to be part of this service, attend these three combined classes.

EARS: Erie Area Rabbit and Rescue Society Service learning project

We are now collecting paper towels, 30 gallon black garbage bags, and newspapers for the rabbit shelter. We will also have a fundraiser in the month of March. Any child (or adult) that raises \$25 cash for the shelter will receive a free T-shirt. See the attached form for a preview.

Save the Date:

May 19 Teacher Appreciation Day and End of the Year Talent/Variety Show
May 19, 2019 is the end of the school year. We will celebrate the hard work of all the teachers with refreshments during coffee hour. After lunches are packed for the Upper Room (don't forget, all hands on deck for packing lunches), we will have an RE end of the year Pizza Party, Dress Rehearsal, and Talent Show. I am still taking sign-ups for the talent show (Deadline April 1, 2019). Those who are directly participating in the talent show, please stay for food and rehearsal, If you want to attend the show, return to the UUCE before 2pm.

Blessings,
Susan Galle-Boyko, DRE

Biography of our Speaker on March 3

Born in Morgantown, WV but raised in Carmichaels, PA, Ben Speggen moved in 2003 to Erie, Pennsylvania to attend Gannon University. After receiving his bachelor's and master's degrees in English, he went on to teach at Gannon as well as Mercyhurst University. He was a direct care assistant at L'Arche Erie before going on to assist in the launch of the *Erie Reader* in 2011 and served there as its first managing editor. Currently, he serves as a contributing editor at the region's alt., independent publication. He joined the team at the Jefferson Educational Society in 2015 as its Program Developer. In 2017, he became the think tank's Director of Operations, overseeing each of its divisions and directs its Civic Leadership Academy. He serves on the Board of Directors for L'Arche, is a member of the Erie County Poet Laureate Initiative, and represents the Jefferson on the

Biography of our Speaker on March 31

Pastor Chuck Cammarata is a Pittsburgher (and therefore a rabid Steeler fan) who, in February 2018, ended a 32 year run as Pastor of Fairview Presbyterian church. Today, as he revels in retirement, he has begun to get involved with organizations like "One Table", and "Art-Erie" (ask him about it) and has returned to his roots as an artist (I am creating again). He is enjoying the time to be a friend again, and is giving time and love to his three children, their partners, and their kids. Most of all he is finding time for the person he cares most about in this world his wonderful wife, Donna.

West Millcreek Food Pantry February Food Blitz

The final total of items donated to the Food Pantry on Souper Bowl Sunday was 110!! My trunk truly was filled. Thank you for all who participated. And a big "thank you" to Joanne Davis for helping me load the car the following Monday!

Deb DiPlacido



Reverend Charles Dieterich
minister@uuerie.org



Please join our Facebook page, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie! Here you can find Sunday Service announcements, upcoming events, conversations, words of inspiration and much more. For additional information, please contact Kristin Maguire at (krisspins@aol.com).

UUCE Thursday Email Updates

Every Thursday an update of UUCE events and news for the week is sent out via email.

If you would like to be included on the UUCE email mailing list, please contact Joanne@uuerie.org before 9:30 a.m. Thursdays.

Secretary:

Joanne Davis

Office Hours:

Monday, Wednesday and Friday
8-11:30 a.m.
Tues. & Thurs., 8 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Please direct all mail to:

P.O. Box 3495, Erie, PA 16508

Leave Voice Messages

814-864-9300

We're On The Web!
uuerie.org

March Birthdays

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 01—Emma Woods Nathanson | 23—Mary Desmone |
| 04—Peggy Richardson | 26—Ray Sherman |
| 06—Chris Cedzo | 27—Tammy Blount |
| 08—Rick Haire | 28—Jim Wise |
| 15—Amelia Steinbrink | |
| 16—Lauren Galle Boyko | |
| 16—Matthew Maguire | |
| 18—Richard Morley | |
| 18—Mary Zuck | |
| 23—Herta Danowski | |



The Beacon is published monthly.

We welcome your suggestions and submissions.

The deadline for articles for the April issue is

Saturday, March 16.

Send submissions to:

Joanne@uuerie.org.

Beacon Editor/Layout: Joanne Davis

Content Review: Dr. Regis T. Sabol

To receive future newsletters via e-mail link or through the mail, please register with Joanne at 864-9300 or Joanne@uuerie.org.

Remember, you must register to receive a newsletter.

Service Attendance:

- 01/06/19—New Orleans Jazz Funeral—Leigh Kostis, coordinator—63 adults, 10 children.
01/13/19—The Work of Christmas—Rev. Charlie—42 adults, 3 children.
01/20/19—Bayard Rustin and MLK, Partners in Change—Rev. Charlie—19 adults.
01/27/19—Mystery of Beginnings and Endings—Rev. John Ballance—51 adults, 6 children.

March 2019



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Atheist and Agnostic Community 7 p.m.	2 Alcoholics Anonymous 8:30 a.m. Tai Chi 9:30-10:30 a.m.
Sunday Service 10:30 a.m. Potluck lunch after the service 3 Bellydance 4 p.m.	Buddhist Sangha 7 p.m. Erie Moot 7 p.m. 4	Homeschool Group 12-3 p.m. 5 Erie Philharmonic Chorus 6:30-9 p.m.	Girl Scouts 1:30-3 p.m. 6	Memory Café 1-3 p.m. 7	8 Atheist and Agnostic Community 7 p.m.	Alcoholics Anonymous 8:30 a.m. Tai Chi 9:30-10:30 a.m. Workshop on Membership 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m. 9
Sunday Service 10:30 a.m. 10 Bellydance 4 p.m.	Buddhist Sangha 7 p.m. PFLAG 7 p.m. 11	12 Erie Philharmonic Chorus 6:30-9 p.m.	Girl Scouts 1:30-3 p.m. Board of Trustees 5 p.m. 13	Sunday Services 4 p.m. 14	15 Spiritual Reflection Group 10:30 a.m. Atheist and Agnostic Community 7 p.m.	Alcoholics Anonymous 8:30 a.m. Tai Chi 9:30-10:30 a.m. 16
Sunday Service 10:30 a.m. 17 Bellydance 4 p.m. 	Buddhist Sangha 7 p.m. 18	Tuesday Morning Music Club 9 a.m.-Noon One Table Steering Committee 4 p.m. Finance 4:30 p.m. Erie Philharmonic Chorus 6:30-9 p.m. 19	Girl Scouts 1:30-3 p.m. 20	Memory Café 1-3 p.m. 21	22 Atheist and Agnostic Community 7 p.m.	Alcoholics Anonymous 8:30 a.m. Tai Chi 9:30-10:30 a.m. Erie Sisters 6:30 p.m. 23
Sunday Service 10:30 a.m. Upper Room Lunch Prep after the service Bellydance 2 p.m. Whispering Lake Grove 5 p.m. 24	Buddhist Sangha 7 p.m. 25	Homeschool Group 12-3 p.m. Erie Philharmonic Chorus 6:30-9 p.m. 26	Girl Scouts 1:30-3 p.m. 27	28	29 Atheist and Agnostic Community 7 p.m.	Alcoholics Anonymous 8:30 a.m. Tai Chi 9:30-10:30 a.m. 30
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