



Unitarian  
Universalist  
Congregation of  
Erie

September 2020

# The Beacon



**Sunday Services**— In-person services are suspended until further notice. Please watch the weekend news and our website for details about our virtual services. Want to get an email giving you the Zoom link to the service? Email [uuerie.zoom@gmail.com](mailto:uuerie.zoom@gmail.com). **Theme for September: Balance.**

**September 6      Riding the Waves**  
*Speaker: Rev. Kristina Church*

Join us for our traditional in-gathering ceremony, known as the Water Ceremony, practiced by Unitarian Universalists all over the country, and even the world, to mark the beginning of our congregational year. We celebrate the power of water to connect, to create, and to give life. Music: Jackson Froman.

**September 13      The 2020 U.S. Census:  
Democracy in the Balance**  
*Guest Speaker: Michele Jaggi, Erie County Census  
Outreach Coordinator (biography on page 4)*

As the Trump Administration rushes to shut down the 2020 census, we will explore the historical importance of the census and the critical necessity of an accurate census that reflects all of us and ensures a representative democracy. Service Leader: Regis Sabol. Music: Jackson Froman and James Pearson.

**September 20      International Day of Balance**  
*Speaker: Rev. Kristina Church*

The autumn equinox, a time when day and night are of roughly equal duration on our planet, is a chance to take stock of our own lives and how we are balancing our commitments right now. Even during a pandemic, we need to find ways to create stability and harmony in our lives. The present moment is actually the perfect time to do this! Music: Jackson Froman.

**September 27      Our Music Holds Our Culture:  
Love Songs from the Middle East**

*Guest Musicians: Nibal Abd El Karim and  
Belal and Ibrahim Al Dehneh  
(biographies on page 5)*

Three wonderful musicians who now call Erie home will share traditional and popular ballads from Syria, Egypt, Palestine, and Lebanon. They will discuss how their songs communicate their culture and values. All three believe strongly in the power of music to heal, to remember, and to bring communities together in peace. Coordinator: Kelly Armor

**President:**  
**Julie Maguire**

**UUCE Board Members:**  
**Ron Brown**  
**Mary Beth McCarthy**  
**Annette Krusewicz**  
**Steve Sullivan**  
**Blair Tuttle**  
**Nanci Lorei**

*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

Greetings, all you wonderful UU Erie folks!

It's hard to believe that the summer is coming to an end, and we're all heading back into whatever version of our normal lives we can muster right now. Everything seems out of control, and yet we're tasked with finding some kind of steady rhythm, as we ride the waves of this pandemic.

For some of us, it may feel like surfing the waves of a turbulent ocean. For others, it may seem like standing on a tightrope, continually shifting and redistributing our weight as the center of gravity shifts under us again and again. And for others of us, it may be more like a long and dreary stretch of days and nights, with little variation or relief in sight.

What can unite us in our separate bunkers right now? Well, we can acknowledge that we're all reaching for equilibrium, each in our own way and within our own unique circumstances. That's why this month's theme is *Balance*. We all need to find a new place where the moving parts of our lives can come to a place of harmony and order. And we can explore these needs, and find ways of meeting them, in our beloved faith community.

What are you doing to balance the demands of the present moment with your own needs for connection, beauty, and joy? What intentional practices have you put into place to create harmony, respite, or just plain survival right now? Come and share your ideas with your fellow congregants this month, as we explore theme of *Balance*. And maybe, just maybe, we'll emerge on the other end of September a little bit more centered, as we continue on the wild ride of 2020.

Blessings until we meet again,  
Kristina

## ERIE GIVES DAY RESULTS

Our congregation gave a record \$42,130 to the UUCE on Erie Gives Day, August 11. Many of the donors used this opportunity to pay part, or all, of their annual pledge on this day. By doing so, we will increase the percentage match given by the Erie Community Foundation from its corporate sponsors.

Last year our donations, including the match, totaled \$27,658. Although we don't yet know the match amount, this year's increase will be approximately \$15,000. In September we will report the exact amounts of pledges, gifts, and the Erie Community Foundation match.

We would like to thank the 45 separate donors who gave generously to our congregation. Since this was the only fund raiser planned for our 2020-21 year, it can be declared a huge success!! Thanks to all who were able to give!

Joan August  
Michael and Lisa Balsan  
Gregory Blackman  
Nancy Brazill and Anthony  
Giammarise  
Ron Brown  
Deborah Cable  
Robert Cullen  
Edith and Mehmet Cultu  
Mary Desmone  
Deborah DiPlacido  
Jon and Emily Fetzner  
Carla Fisher  
George Frank  
Theresa Gamble  
Robert and Diane Guthrie

Debbie and Rick Haire  
Stephen Henry  
Jill Johnson  
Leigh Kostis  
Howard and Janet Krack  
Garrett Lindahl  
Christine Linkie and Doug  
Michali  
Julie and Kristin Maguire  
Donna Martin  
Roberta McCall  
Mary Beth McCarthy  
Susan Merwin  
Dixie Morrow  
Nancy Read  
Al Richardson

Michele Unger Rupp  
Sarah Simkovitch  
Lin-Lang Su and James Pearson  
Ann Townsend  
Blair Tuttle  
John Vanco and Kelly Armor  
Katherine Wolper  
Betty Young  
Elizabeth Yount  
Diana Ziemniak  
Anonymous-5



## HIGHWAY PICKUP

Planned for September 26 from 9 until 11 a.m.

We will meet in the church parking lot and proceed from there. We are looking for no more than 10 participants so that we can maintain proper social distancing. If you are interested in participating, please email [joanne@uuerie.org](mailto:joanne@uuerie.org).

Thank you!



A CAMPAIGN OF NALEO Educational Fund



*There is a kind of vegetable in Vietnam called he (pronounced “hey”). It belongs to the onion family and looks like a scallion, and it is very good in soup. The more you cut the he plants at the base, the more they grow. If you don’t cut them they won’t grow very much. But if you cut them often, right at the base of the stalk, they grow bigger and bigger. This is also true of the practice of generosity. If you give and continue to give, you become richer and richer all the time, richer in terms of happiness and well-being. This may seem strange but it is always true.*

-story told by Thich Nhat Hahn

Welcome back RE families and friends! I hope everyone is doing well – the RE committee and I are looking forward to getting to try out some new ideas for classes this fall. We are returning to our Tapestry of Faith curriculum and picking up where we left off. This month’s theme for the RE Groups will be generosity and will include a lesson about what it means to be a good steward. In addition to our Zoom lessons, the RE kids will be receiving monthly packages that will build upon the theme for that month and hopefully provide some thoughtful discussions. Please contact me if you are interested in the RE program and would like more information about what our plans are for the fall.

~Candace Williams

## BIOGRAPHY OF OUR GUEST SPEAKER ON SEPTEMBER 13



Michelle Jaggi graduated from Penn State University with a degree in psychology. Prior to her current position, she worked in the social service field for over 15 years. As the Census Outreach Coordinator for Erie County, Michelle has been working to connect Erie community members with information to be prepared and motivated to complete the 2020 Census. Outside of work, Michelle has been attending UUCE for several years and her son is active in our RE program.

## BIOGRAPHIES OF OUR GUEST MUSICIANS ON SEPTEMBER 27



**Nibal Abd El Karim** grew up in a Palestinian family in Nazareth, Israel. She became a professional singer in her late teens, and sang at local festivals and at college events. People took pride in her singing as it was a symbol of their common suffering and desire for peace. Nibal met her Syrian-born husband at college in Jordan. Since Syria and Israel have no diplomatic relations and the Jordanian government could not offer the couple and their two infant children any legal status, they sought asylum in United States in 2009. She now has four children and lives with her husband in Erie. They own and run Sham Market and the Shawarma Station food truck that specialize in Syrian cuisine.

Nibal has been active in sharing her music and children's songs from other refugees as part of the Old Songs New Opportunities project. Since 2013 she has visited over 40 early childhood classrooms to teach multicultural songs that help children develop and learn. She has assisted in many teacher trainings about the power of song and believes that music can act as a passport to another culture. Nibal's gentle manner, beautiful voice and eagerness to connect with individuals comes through in her teaching.

**Ibrahim and Belal Al Dehnah** are a father and son duo from Syria. They both sing and play traditional and 20<sup>th</sup> century popular ballads from the Arab speaking world. Both musicians are self-taught, having learned from the community, and play exclusively by ear. Ibrahim plays the oud, a relative of the lute and one of the oldest Arab instruments. Belal plays the doumbek, also known as the goblet drum common to North Africa and the Middle East, which has a ceramic or metal body. Their family is from Daraa, Syria, a city about the same size as Erie with roots in antiquity.

They say, "We love to play Syrian and other Arab music. We were both born with the desire to make music and to share it. This is natural for artists to want others to enjoy their work. It is important for the Syrians in Erie to have us play because we must have our live music at our big celebrations. It is not a real wedding or party without our songs. Some people don't know about our culture and we also want to show them our music, too. Our songs are about history and peace between cultures. We want everyone to learn how we live, how we raise children, and the beauty of the Arabic language. We are proud of our long history. We tell our audience, do not be afraid if you do not understand our words. You can still feel our music, feel our love for each other, and feel the connection that we are all human."

Reverend Kristina Church  
kristinachurch@hotmail.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.

"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).

### Secretary:

Joanne Davis  
Office Hours:

Monday—Thursday 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Fridays 9 a.m.—1:30 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](http://uuerie.org)

The Beacon is published monthly.

We welcome your suggestions and submissions.

**The deadline for articles for the October issue is Saturday, September 19**

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.

## September Birthdays

03—Michele Rupp  
05—Linda Burfield  
09—Finnegan Schaufele  
15—Hannah Cedzo  
16—Chris Cedzo  
18—Lisa Nathanson  
21—Bob Rhodes  
24—Liz Yount  
25—Barb Brennan  
29—Ann Townsend  
29—Lynne Brown



### Service Attendance:

August 2—On Sacred Ground—Mary Desmone and Steve Sullivan—55 participants.  
August 9—Cloth and Culture of West Africa—Ansumana Komba Gbembo—42 participants.  
August 16—Sunday Services Committee on Break—Social Half-Hour—17 participants.  
August 23—Sunday Services Committee on Break—Social Half-Hour—15 participants.

# September 2020



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>All Building Use Suspended Until Further Notice.</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>			

