



March 2021

# The Beacon



Unitarian  
Universalist  
Congregation of  
Erie

**Sunday Services**— In-person services are suspended until further notice. Please watch the weekend news and our website for details about and links to our virtual services. **Theme for March: Vision.**

## March 7 Community Means Strength

Speaker: Rev. Kristina

*We are all longing to go home to some place we have never been—a place half-remembered and half-envisioned we can only catch glimpses of from time to time...Community means strength that joins our strength to do the work that needs to be done. --Starhawk*

As we emerge from winter and from a global pandemic and take a look around us, what is the work that needs to be done-- in our congregation, our city, and our world? What is our faith calling us to do?

## March 14 Side with Love Sunday

Service Coordinator: Kelly Armor

The worship service features stirring music, deep-hearted reflection, and moving testimonies from a range of UU leaders. It is the culmination of Thirty Days of Love, an annual celebration led by the Unitarian Universalist Association that lifts up the ways Unitarian Universalists and partner organizations are taking bold, courageous action for intersectional racial justice. Reflections by Dr. Takiyah Nur Amin (Black Lives of UU Organizing Collective Board), Dr. Tuli Patel (Beacon Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Summit, NJ), Rev. Michael Crumpler (LGBTQ and Multicultural Programs Director of the UUA) and Julica Hermann de la Fuente (Director of Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Ministries at the First Universalist Church of Minneapolis). Music from All Souls Unitarian Church, Tulsa, OK and First Unitarian Church in Brooklyn, NY.

## March 21 Our Journey into Tomorrow

Speaker: Rev. Kristina

Casting a vision takes courage and imagination. Bringing it about takes hard work and commitment. How can we move boldly into the tomorrow of our dreams, with the resources it will take to make the vision a reality?

## March 28 Creating Hope and Opportunity in Erie's Eastside Neighborhoods

Guest Speaker: Daria Devlin, Executive Director of Erie Center for Arts & Technology (bio on pg. 4)

Ms. Devlin's talk will focus on ECAT's replication of the successful Manchester Bidwell Educational model, and its decision to locate the program in the former Wayne School at 6th and East Avenue. She will share her vision for this project and its holistic impact on Erie's Eastside neighborhoods. Service Coordinator: Al Richardson.

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**Julie Maguire**

**Vice-President:**

**Mary Beth McCarthy**

**UUCE Board Members:**

**Secretary—Ron Brown**

**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



*We do not think ourselves into new ways of being. Rather, we act ourselves into new ways of thinking and being.*

--Dr. Sharon Welch

Greetings, UU Erie members and friends! Are you ready for spring?!

We emerge from our deep dive into the human condition of *Imperfection* during the cold, snowy month of February, ready to spring into our March theme of *Vision*! And oh my stars, are we ever aching to envision something different-- *anything* other than our current pandemic-induced, socially-distant, virtual reality.

Whenever we imagine a future that's different from the present, we are casting a vision of how things might be. But it's not enough simply to dream or wish or even think ourselves into a new reality. No, we must *act* ourselves into new ways of being.

And so this month, we're focusing on making our dreams a reality: both the visioning, and the doing.

- ◆ It's time for our annual Pledge Drive-- the place where the horizon of our vision meets the rubber of the road. We'll be talking about the practice of generosity, and sharing information about how our hopes and dreams for the future of UU Erie can become a reality.
- ◆ We'll be reimagining the way we do hospitality, as we spend some time focusing on transgender inclusion, through an exciting congregation-wide training from the Transforming Hearts Collective. I hope you'll join us, as we envision an even more diverse and inclusive community, one where everyone feels welcomed, supported, and nurtured!
- ◆ Finally, we'll be envisioning the world we want to bring about through our congregational justice work. We'll be formulating an action plan for our Social Responsibility committee, and I am sure you'll want to be on board. Join us as we move boldly into the future!

Won't you join us on this journey of being and becoming, toward a wholeness that may as yet exist only in our dreams? Come along, travel with us, believe that another way is possible. Let's build that other way, together.

Blessings for the courage and strength to bring about YOUR vision of a better tomorrow!

~Kristina

## PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS



This month we consider and celebrate the idea of vision. What great time to imagine the ways we can grow both within our congregation and in our community! Here is the vision statement we adopted several years ago.

### Our Vision

- 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.

One very concrete way we will be making our vision real is by participating in the Transforming Hearts Collective sessions. We have purchased these training sessions so we can “deeply explore the intersection of trans identity, spirituality, and faith community, and gain the grounding, context, and skills to transform (our)selves and (our) congregation.” By engaging in these sessions, we will be able to proudly serve our community as a Welcoming Congregation.

Another is by participating in the process of conversations about calling Rev. Kristina as our settled minister. In the short time I have had to work with Rev. Kristina, I have been so impressed by how fluidly she incorporates her deep understanding of our guiding principles into all the facets of our shared ministry. Indeed, the concept of “shared ministry” is something we have talked about for several years, but have only recently been able to realize. My hope is that we will be able to take the lessons we are learning about ourselves and our liberal religious values into our community with Reverend Kristina leading the way.

Lastly, in order to continue the growth we have experienced and the growth we envision, we all need to consider how we can contribute to our congregation. While there are a variety of ways we can be stewards to our congregation, this is the time of year we need to make whatever financial commitments are possible for each of us. Our journey to the future will be meaningful and purposeful if we all give to the best of our abilities.

~Julie Maguire

## TRANSGENDER INCLUSION IN CONGREGATIONS

We are so excited to offer an Adult Religious Education course this spring, called ***Transgender Inclusion in Congregations!***

Created by the Transforming Hearts Collective specifically for UU congregations, this course is for EVERYONE: all UU Erie members and friends are invited to join us March 13 & 27th, April 10th & 24th, May 8th & 22nd from 9-11 a.m.

**What is this?** It's a six-session online class that will help us in our own understanding of gender (our own and other people's). What we'll learn together will help us expand the concept of being a Welcoming Congregation--and how to extend hospitality even more skillfully and inclusively. If you haven't had a chance to look at it yet, here is a link to some information and an introductory video from the creators about the course:

<https://transforming-hearts-collective.teachable.com/p/transgender-inclusion-in-congregations>.

Please see your email and upcoming Weekend News editions for more details.

## NOTES FROM THE RE CHALKBOARD

### BIOGRAPHY OF OUR GUEST SPEAKER ON MARCH 28, DARIA DEVLIN

A life-long resident of the City of Erie, Daria Devlin is the Executive Director of the Erie Center for Arts & Technology. Prior to this role, she served as the Coordinator of Grants and Communications for Erie's Public Schools. She is an alumna of the district, having attended Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School and graduated from the former Central High School in 1995.

Ms. Devlin holds a Bachelor's degree from Colgate University and a Master's in Educational Leadership from Edinboro University.

She lives in the City of Erie with her husband Neal and three teenage sons, Nick, Nate and Alex.

This month it's all about vision, and it's taken me quite a while to decide what to say about it in the RE newsletter. I have to admit that vision is not something that is really on my radar right now. While some days are better than others, it seems that most of the time I am incapable of looking past the day we are currently stuck in. One moment I'm excited, and the future is all I can think about, and the next moment everything falls apart, and I feel as if I'll be stuck in this parenting/COVID grind forever. However, I know that this too shall pass (as I am so frequently told) and there really is so much to look forward to and to accomplish. There are visions for the earth, visions for racial and economic equality, visions for our children's future and even visions for our own personal growth. What I really want to know though, is what will the future look like for our congregation?

My children's future was actually one of the main reasons I took my first steps into the UUCE building almost 6 years ago. When I was younger, my family was part of a tradition that was not supportive of my mother's (and eventually my) beliefs and so we drifted away. I grew up feeling like I didn't quite belong - and I have a feeling there are others out there that have felt the same way at some point in their lives. It wasn't until I had children that I knew I needed a supportive community to help raise them - and one to help myself. I wanted a community that shared the same morals and values that I wanted to pass down to my children. One that acknowledged it's ok for each of us to have a different path up the mountain, so to speak. One that was willing to speak for those who cannot be heard. Communities give our children support, a sense of belonging, a strong sense of self and a sense of connection. A community allows children and their families to feel emotionally and physically safe and valued. They also help instill a sense of sharing and caring for one another. I want ours to be an inclusive community that supports families and shows them they belong and are wanted. They are our future. My vision for our congregation is filled with hope. Hope that we will continue to grow, hope that our RE program will grow with it and hope that you will be there when we need you. There are others out there who are searching for what I was searching for and it's only a matter of time until they find us. When that time comes, I hope we are able to offer them something that they might not even realize they need. I also hope they have a sense of belonging when they get here, like I did. And most importantly, I hope we remember that it really does take a village.

Those receiving the pre-teen/teen newsletter will learn about vision, think about what vision they might hold for the future and how important a community can be in fulfilling these visions. I'll share how to make a vision board to get them thinking about the future. Once again, links will be available on the UUCE website page under RE Connect so that anyone may find resources about visions that might be of interest to them, how we can help one another and why it is important to have a strong community for the well-being of us all. Our preschool newsletter will take a look at how friends and family and those in our community can help us. We will be holding a scavenger hunt over Zoom on Sunday, March 28th at 2pm. If you or someone you know who might like to join in on the fun, please email me at [cjw7988@yahoo.com](mailto:cjw7988@yahoo.com) so that I may share the Zoom link.





## ***Our Journey into Tomorrow:* Our 2021-22 UUCE Pledge Campaign**

Beginning with a kickoff service on March 21, we will be conducting our annual pledge campaign for the next fiscal year. The theme, *Our Journey into Tomorrow*, represents our opportunity to continue ministerial support, improvements to our building, and renewed work on our mission and vision. During the third week of March you will receive a mailing explaining how you can be a part of this exciting yearly funding effort. Through our collective efforts we will reach our budget goals. This year we have unique challenges.

None of us could have predicted the changes and challenges we have faced this past year. As the pandemic began the Board of Trustees instituted a plan to keep us safe. Our Sunday Services Committee immediately rose to the challenge of creating Zoom services. The congregation's members and friends reached out to each other with phone calls to keep us connected. We said goodbye to one minister and welcomed another. As the year anniversary of the pandemic arrives, we have settled into our Zoom services, our ministry with Rev. Kristina Church is strong, and we eagerly anticipate the time when we can be together again in our beloved sanctuary, celebrate the new mural in the Olympia Brown room, and resume our Children's Religious Education and other programs.

**During our pledge drive from March 21-April 15, 2021, you will be asked to make a generous pledge to *Our Journey into Tomorrow* for our congregation.** The congregation has voted to complete the siding of the building and improvements to the parking lot. The Aesthetics Committee has more plans for improvements to the building and grounds. Despite our year apart, Candace Williams, our Children's Religious Education director, with her cadre of volunteers, is still leading our children in such interesting and exciting ways. As a congregation we are meeting to determine how to improve our programs in the community, as well as ministering to each other.

Most importantly we, hopefully, have a unique opportunity to continue our ministry with Rev. Kristina Church. A Call Process Task Force is working on the process for calling Rev. Kristina as our settled minister. Their recommendation will be presented to the congregation for a vote, hopefully at the end of April. Professional ministry requires a significant financial commitment. Everyone in our congregation will be asked to rise to the *Our Journey into Tomorrow* challenge. Despite the continuing challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and the sadness of the past year, it is still an exciting time. Let's continue looking forward and *Journey to Tomorrow*. And, please, pledge the most you are able to support the financial health of our congregation.

**Thanks to all of us the future looks bright!**

The Pledge Team of Edie Cultu and Leigh Kostis

Reverend Kristina Church  
kristinachurch@hotmail.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:**

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**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  
April issue is  
Saturday, March 20 .**

Send submissions to:  
Joanne@uuerie.org.

Beacon Editor/Layout: Joanne Davis

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To receive future newsletters via  
e-mail link or through the mail, please  
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Joanne@uuerie.org.

Remember, you must register  
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**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.



Find us on  
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"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).

**March Birthdays**

- |                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 01—Emma Woods Nathanson | 18—Mary Zuck      |
| 06—Chris Cedzo          | 23—Mary Desmone   |
| 08—Rick Haire           | 26—Ray Sherman    |
| 15—Amelia Steinbrink    | 27—Tammy Blount   |
| 16—Matthew Maguire      | 28—Jim Wise       |
| 18—Richard Morley       | 31—Dennis Vickery |

**Service Attendance:**

February 7—Of Bechdel and the Bible—Rev. Kristina—5 participants.

February 14—Love, Perfect and Otherwise—Regis Sabol and various speakers—  
53 participants

February 21—Revolutionary Love—Rev. Kristina—70 participants.

# March 2021



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 Sunday Zoom service, gather at 10 a.m., service at 10:30	8 Buddhist Sangha Zoom gathering, 7 p.m.	9 Sunday Services Committee Zoom meeting 5 p.m.	10	11	12	13 Transgender Inclusion for Congregations Course 9-11 a.m.
14 Sunday Zoom service, gather at 10 a.m., service at 10:30	15 Buddhist Sangha Zoom gathering, 7 p.m.	16	17 	18 Board of Trustees Zoom meeting 6 p.m.	19	20 
21 Sunday Zoom service & Pledge Kickoff, gather at 10 a.m., service at 10:30	22 Buddhist Sangha Zoom gathering, 7 p.m.	23 Sunday Services Committee Zoom meeting 5 p.m.	24	25	26	27 Transgender Inclusion for Congregations Course 9-11 a.m.
28 Sunday Zoom service, gather at 10 a.m., service at 10:30 RE Zoom Scavenger Hunt 2 p.m.	29 Buddhist Sangha Zoom gathering, 7 p.m.	30	31			