



The Beacon

April 2026

Sunday Services - Begin at 10:30 and last approximately 60-75 minutes and are available both in person and via Zoom. Please see [our website](#) for the Zoom link.

April Theme: Embracing Possibility

April 5 The Possibility of Peace

Speaker: Liz Yount

After joining the Walk for Peace monks in January 2026, Liz felt a sense of peace and joy that begs to be shared. In these times of chaos and division in our country, the message of the monks is a reason for hope. The walk is over, but the energy of the practice continues with us.

April 12 Erie's Black Wall Street

Speaker: Kyra L. Taylor

Integrity - We do the right thing even when no one is looking.

Community - We are deeply rooted in the community, bound by a common goal of community improvement.

Bravery - We embrace learning, open-mindedness, courage, adaptability, and innovation.

Optimistic Realism - We imagine a world with equal opportunities while embracing practical realism.

Uplifting Black Voices - We nurture true gifts and talents, fostering mutuality.

April 19 Embracing our Earth

Speaker: Rev. Jo Green

What is the possibility of creating an earth where all can live in abundance and opportunity? In the midst of the Unitarian Universalist Climate Justice Month and the approaching Earth Day commemorations, what options can we take to help our planet become the prosperous clean environment we all long for? How do we make it a priority to help heal the planet? Join us this Sunday with ways we can decrease our footprints before they become too deep.

April 26 Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations

Speaker: Josh Brown

For 60 years, the Star Trek franchise has provided a vision of possibility for the future while addressing present-day social issues. Perhaps the most relevant part of that vision is the core Vulcan philosophy of Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations. Join Josh as he explores IDIC and what Star Trek has to say to us today and for the future.

UUerie Board of Trustees:

Kelly Armor, President

Dixie Morrow,

Vice President

Michael Long, Secretary

Chris Brown, Trustee

Andrew Greene, Trustee

Beth Kopay, Trustee

Marcella Smith, Trustee

Diane Guthrie, Treasurer

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.*



BIOGRAPHY OF OUR SPEAKER ON APRIL 5

Liz Yount has been a member of UUerie for 25 years, leading the Buddhist Sangha since 2007 and sharing sangha with inmates at SCI Albion twice monthly. She has lived in Erie her whole life, graduating from Edinboro State College. Her teaching career included Iroquois and Erie School District and 2 years with the PA Migrant Program. Most importantly, she is Mom to Julie and Kelly, and Grama to Brooke and Lucas. She enjoys yoga/meditation, strength training, and walking at Presque Isle or in the woods.

BIOGRAPHY OF OUR SPEAKER ON APRIL 12

Kyra L. Taylor is a dynamic and visionary leader in nonprofit leadership, community organizing, and economic justice. A native of New Castle, PA, she founded Erie’s Black Wall Street (EBWS) to address the systemic inequities impacting Black and minority communities in Erie.

Kyra’s work is rooted in both purpose and place. Recognized with the *Erie Reader’s 40 Under 40*, the *PA Impact Award*, and named a *2025 PA Local Hero by Spotlight PA*. Her mission is clear: to transform Erie from the margins outward and build a future where equity and opportunity are the standard—not the exception.



BIOGRAPHY OF OUR SPEAKER ON APRIL 19

Reverend Jo Green rejoins us this morning. She is an MDiv graduate of Starr King School for the Ministry, a community minister and chaplain, retired. Rev. Jo serves as the At Large Board Member for the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP).

BIOGRAPHY OF OUR SPEAKER ON APRIL 26

Josh holds a B.S. in Social Science from Rogers State University (Claremore,OK). He is a former board member for Sunday Assembly Nashville, an agnostic/atheist congregation, and also served as the chairperson for their Wonder More committee (their equivalent of UUerie's Living Worship Team) for 4 years. Josh has been a Trekkie since 1991 and his favorite captain is Deep Space Nine's Benjamin Sisko.



APRIL'S SPECIAL COLLECTION

Erie’s Black Wall Street

EBWS serves as a vehicle for change and empowerment of Erie’s Black Community through meaningful relationships, education, social networks, and the promotion of Black entrepreneurship. They aspire to create a culture of Black Excellence and Wealth in Erie, inspiring generations to come. Please donate generously. Use the small special collection envelopes in the collection basket to make a donation. Thank you.



Welcome to Embracing Possibility

Theme Discussion for Sunday, April 19, 2026 Noon--1:00 P.M.

Again this year we are using the materials from *Soul Matters* for an Adult Education theme discussion on the third Sunday of the month, following the Sunday service and a brief coffee hour. The facilitator for the month will present a story, reading, or other introductory thought starter, followed by an opportunity for each participant to react. After everyone who wishes to speak has their chance, the discussion will open up for general participation.

Our goal with these discussions is to get to know each other better and challenge our thinking with each one of the themes. How can we better understand how our UU principles and values help us live in the world? What are those themes that speak directly to each of us? What makes a particular theme difficult for us to carry out? What would we like to concentrate on for personal improvement? What is important for our own spiritual journey?

Our circle will last for approximately one hour. No signups or preparation is required and all are welcome! See Leigh Kostis (Lwko@roadrunner.com) for any questions.

Our theme for April is *Embracing Possibility*. Information on the introductory reading will be sent in the *UU Erie Flame* prior to April 19. Here are some ideas we will discuss.

Hope to see you there!

- How would your life be different if you had trusted in possibility earlier in life?
- We all tell ourselves, "One day I will..." What "One day I will" sentence has been with you the longest? And what would need to change for you to start turning that dream into a reality?
- We're told to live each day as if it were our last. But what if, instead, we lived each day as if it were *our very first*?



I am pleased to share that on March 7th, 2026, I received approval from the Central East Region's Commissioned Lay Ministry Council to serve as a Commissioned Lay Minister for the UU Congregation of Erie. This moment is part of a spiritual journey that began when I was a little girl in Columbus, Georgia, watching my mother live her faith with strength and tenderness. Day after day, I witnessed her deep relationship with God and Jesus—a faith that held steady no matter how hard life became. That early witness shaped my own walk with God, a walk that continues to grow stronger and longer with every step. I never imagined I would be called into this chapter of ministry, and I am humbled, excited, and overjoyed to serve as a servant-leader to this beloved community. My Installation Ceremony will take place on Sunday, May 3rd, 2026, at 10:30 a.m., officiated by Rev. Dr. V. Elaine Strawn. I look forward to sharing this journey of spiritual growth and service with all of you as we continue to walk together in love and purpose.

Blessings Always,

Bobbie Colt

Commissioned Lay Minister, UU Erie Congregation

GROW THE LOVE

2026-2027 STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE CAMPAIGN



Are you a part of our campaign yet? Have you sent in your pledge? Do you have questions? Here's our update so far.

- Our goal is **\$152,400** as set by the Board of Trustees.
- We have contacted 77 members and friends by mail and email.
- As of March 30 we have received responses from **11** people.
- The total pledged amount to date is **\$21,355** or enough to sustain **33.5** days.

As you can see, we need **YOU** to help us reach our goal. Please mail in your form today. **OR** if you are coming to the building, drop your pledge form off in the **GROW THE LOVE** box in the Olympia Brown room. **OR** You can call or email the office (814-864-9300, admin@uuerie.org) and leave a message.

And, please, don't forget to complete the Stewardship side of your pledge form to indicate what talent and time you are willing to give in service to our mission next year!

Please remember that it costs **\$635.75** per day to sustain our congregation. Can we count on you? **Grow the Love for our congregation!**

Eddie Cultu and Leigh Kostis, Stewardship/Pledge Team



WELCOME NEW MEMBER

We are pleased to welcome new member, Josh Brown. Josh has been attending UUerie for a number of years now. He has been involved with a number of projects and currently runs the Game Days on the third Saturday of the month. Josh holds a B.S. in Social Science from Rogers State University (Claremore,OK). He is a former board member for Sunday Assembly Nashville, an agnostic/atheist congregation, and also served as the chairperson for their Wonder More committee (their equivalent of UUerie's Living Worship Team) for 4 years. Welcome to our congregation, Josh!

THANK YOU TO THE HOSTS OF OUR APRIL 12TH POTLUCK LUNCH

Marcella Smith, Ann Bomberger, Chis Brown, Josh Brown and Bryan Hed.

SOLAR PANEL INSTALLED

EIS, our solar contractor, has finished installing 41 solar panels on the roof of UUerie and installed the electrical components necessary inside the building. The next step is to have a Millcreek Township inspector review the entire system and sign off on it. Finally, we will get a visit from First Energy (Penelec) and they will install a meter that measures how much energy our panels are generating, and how much we are sending back to the grid. In the next month or two, when everything is functioning, we'll have a ribbon cutting celebration and invite the local press! Because of generous donors we have all but \$16,700 for this new roof, insulation, and solar project. (Assuming we get the expected Federal rebate) Congratulations members, and friends! Our goal of creating our own clean, green energy is almost complete!



APRIL BOOK CLUB

At our last meeting, after discussing the book *Nomadland*, we scheduled a showing of the movie of the same title for our meeting on April 29th. It will begin at 7:00 and anyone who would like to join us is welcome to come. Our book of choice for May is *The Love of My Life* by Rosie Walsh. That meeting will be held on May 27 in the church library at 7:00. All are welcome to attend.

RECURRING EVENTS

Worship Service in person and on Zoom. Go to uuerie.org for a Zoom link.Sundays at 10:30 AM
Sandwich preparation for the Upper Room Shelter..... First Sunday of the month after the service.
Potluck lunch..... Second Sunday of the month after the service
Theme Discussions..... Third Sunday of the month at noon
Buddhist Sangha.....Mondays at 7:00 PM
(first Monday of the month Zoom only, in person the rest of the month)
Creativity Matters.....Second and Fourth Wednesdays from 6:30-8 PM
Narcotics Anonymous.....Wednesdays at 7 PM
Memory Café.....First and Third Thursdays of the month at 1:00 PM
UUerie Book Club..... last Wednesday of the month at 7:00 in the church library
Atheist and Agnostic Community.....Fridays at 7:00 PM
Alcoholics Anonymous.....Saturdays at 8:30 AM

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes Thursday, March 19, 2026 6:30pm

Attendance - Kelly Armor, Dixie Morrow, Beth Kopay, Michael Long, Marcella Smith, Chris Brown, Andrew Greene

Check In and Chalice Lighting

Call to Order

There were no edits to the **February Minutes, so they are approved.**

Finance Report

Committee Reports

SJC is planning on attending No Kings and having a table. Chris has ordered a stand for our flag. Leigh has brochures ready.

Old Business

1. Action Item: T-Shirts: Michael shared designs he got from Nanci. The Board chose two designs to present to the congregation after Nanci tweaks them a bit.
2. We discussed making more or enhanced Social Justice Signage and decided to set this aside for now, there is no clear leader able to move the process forward.
3. Committee business:
 - a. Social Justice update **Action item: Chris will reach out to Erie Gay News about us and get feedback about how we can be more visible to LBTGQ+ communities, she will do it by the end of the month.**
 - b. Communications Committee update: We posted the position on Indeed and currently have five candidates interested. Kelly, Nanci, and Leigh are figuring out a process to vet them.
4. Personnel Matters

Nour Alsaffan and Cecilia are both pregnant! Cecilia's first born daughter, Dina, has taken over for her starting March 7. Kelly has retained Lina Halabi to be Nour's substitute when she is ready to go on leave. Kelly delivered gift bags to both women. Board members can chip in funds to Kelly. Big thanks to Marcella for pulling the bags together and to Gwen Brown for the adorable beanies!

New Business:

1. Leigh Kostis talked about a meeting she had with Marcus Atkinson about the MLK Center.
–Marcus is reaching out to different congregations, he would like help from us:
 - a. They have a food bank, but it isn't well placed. He has someone employed to distribute food. He hopes to be open two days a week. He needs volunteers to help during the two days a week it will be open.
 - b. They have remodeled the basement. They have a restaurant kitchen. He would like to have a monthly networking dinner. He has arranged for someone to fix the food. He still needs help and he needs people to come.
 - c. He would like us to include the MLK center as a special collection. Alternatively, we can make a project out of helping the MLK center financially.

Board questions:

–*Would there be any conflicts with other centers?* No, they operate independently.

Are there any conflicts with our existing collections for the Millcreek food bank? No, he is not asking us to collect food.

–There is a consensus among the board members that we want to help. We would like to know what is being asked of us in writing that includes the physical demands on volunteers.

–Once we have a written doc we will take it to the SJC and the Caring committee. If they approve it then we'd ask Marcus to come and speak with the congregation to build enthusiasm and enlist support

2. We will retain Annette to help do some spring cleaning and reorganize Classroom A with Kat's guidance.
3. Thoughts about the very real possibility of not having a minister next year. –**Action Item: Kelly will reach out to the Search Team, asking them to put an update in the Beacon in May. We would like some sort of general update as to where we are in the process with the UUA candidate search portal. What is the timeline for when we will be pretty sure that we will not have a minister next year?**
4. Next board meeting date – Thursday, April 16, 2026 6:30 pm., via Zoom (we will consider meeting in person starting in May or June)

Adjourn: Motioned: Beth Seconded: Andrew

Adjourned at 8:17 PM.



Administrator:

Joanne Davis
admin@uuerie.org Office Hours:
Monday—Thursday 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
Fridays 8:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

Please direct all mail to:
7180 Perry Highway,
Erie, PA 16509

Leave Voice
Messages
814-864-9300

We're On The Web!
uuerie.org

Weekly Flame

Every Thursday an update of UUErie events and news for the week is sent out via email. If you would like to be included on the UUErie email mailing list, please contact admin@uuerie.org before 9:30 a.m. Wednesdays.

April Birthdays

- 01 – Lorna Slater
- 03 – Margo Wolfe
- 08 – Andrew Greene
- 13 – Ginny Sabol
- 14 – Greg Blackman
- 24 – Suzanne Marinus
- 26 – Edie Cultu
- 27 – Marcella Smith



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 kmaguire626@gmail.com



We are now on Instagram. Just search for The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie.

The Beacon is published monthly.

We welcome our suggestions and submissions.

The deadline for articles for the May issue is Wedneaday, April 15.

Send submissions to:
admin@uuerie.org.

Beacon Editor/Layout: Leigh Kostis and Joanne Davis.

To receive future newsletters via email link or through the mail, please register with Joanne at 814-864-9300 or admin@uuerie.org.

Remember, you must register to receive a newsletter.



Service Attendance:

March 1 – *Chance Encounters* – Janet Krack – 37 in person, 21 virtual

March 8 – *A Season for Nurturing Seeds* – Rev. Priscilla Richter– 39 in person, 5 virtual.

March 15 – *Is There Love Alive Right Now?* – Rev. Jo Green – 37 in person, 5 virtual.

March 22 – *A Musician's Guide to Paying Attention* – Kelly Armor, Liz Sesler-Beckman, Victoria Angelo – 37 in person, 9 virtual.

March 29 – *Paying Attention* – elise michaux – 30 in person, 7 virtual.