

The Beacon

May 2026

UU Erie Board of Trustees:

Kelly Armor, President

Dixie Morrow,

Vice President

Michael Long, Secretary

Chris Brown, Trustee

Andrew Greene, Trustee

Marcella Smith, Trustee

Diane Guthrie, Treasurer

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.

May Theme: Awakening Curiosity

May 3 *Reaching Beloved Community Together*

Speaker: Rev. Dr. V. Elaine Strawn

We gather on a very special day to commission one of our own: Bobbie Colt as a commissioned lay minister! Some of us feel a special call to ministry; all of us feel a special call to share our best selves in some ways. We ALL share in creating a world of justice, creativity, and compassion.

May 10 *Wonder Working Power in the Love*

Speaker: Rev. Ann Keeler Evans

In this sermon she will reflect on her participation in a conference at the Yale School of Public Theology/Policy. It was led by a Black Southern Preacher, and the attendants were "taken to church" exploring the power of love through learning and song.

May 17 *Risks, Realities, and Hope for Preventing Firearm Suicide*

Speaker: Dr. Jay Breneman

Suicide by gun is a silent killer and largely misunderstood. Hear about Dr. Jay Breneman's work with CeaseFire PA Education Fund where they translate research into practical, community-driven prevention efforts. Learn about how they reduce stigma, challenge misconceptions, and elevate the voices of individuals, families, and communities affected by loss.

May 24 *A History of Religion in Twenty Two and a Half Minutes*

Speaker: Rev. Chuck Cammarata

Why are human beings relentlessly religious? Why did religions develop in the first place? What makes religion good or bad? These are the questions with which we will grapple in this sermon.

May 31 *The Art of Sound Healing / Connection to Spirit*

Speaker: Jessica Frombach

"In the beginning was the word and the word was God". Creation is the Light/Sound. There is Power of the words Sounds, Vibrations, and Frequencies. Sound is the 1st sense developed in the womb. Babies can hear the heart beat of the mother. That heart beat is the Drum connecting us to those pure states of life. Sound creating in the atmosphere effects the "mood" emotional and mental states. Lets connect to the Spirit through Sound. Sound bath opportunity after the service, details below.

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 MAY 3

Rev. Dr. Elaine Strawn grew up in a Methodist parsonage, served as a United Methodist minister in Cleveland, and then in racial and reproductive justice agencies. In 1996, she entered the UU ministry. She has served congregations in Wooster, Canton, Bellville, and Cleveland, as well as in an interim role with the Central East Region of the UUA. She is currently a member of the Commissioned Lay Minister Council.

BIOGRAPHY OF OUR SPEAKER ON MAY 10

The Rev. Ann Keeler Evans (annkeelerevans.org) is a Peacemaker, Poet, Chaplain and Preacher who is very happy to be visiting Erie and this congregation on what she hopes is an annual invitation to come and preach!



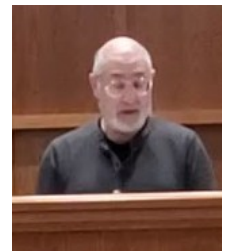
BIOGRAPHY OF OUR SPEAKER ON MAY 17

Dr. Jay Breneman is a [Stoneleigh Fellow](#) and Director of Firearm Suicide Prevention at the [CeaseFirePA Education Fund](#), where he leads statewide prevention strategies. A licensed social worker and former U.S. Army Staff Sergeant, Jay served more than six years in the military, including three overseas tours. He has extensive teaching experience in community change and public policy, having taught at Case Western Reserve University, Edinboro University, Gannon University, and Mercyhurst University. Jay lives in Erie with his wife and their three children and is serving his third year as Board President of the [City of Erie School District](#)



BIOGRAPHY OF OUR SPEAKER ON MAY 24

Chuck Cammarata, former pastor at Fairview Presbyterian (retired after 33 years at a very young age!!), Rejoins us today. In the summer, Chuck putters around the garden and cruises around town on his Honda Nighthawk. He dabbles in a few community projects, produces a podcast, makes lamps, clocks, and other stuff from driftwood, and schmoozes almost daily at local coffee shops (especially Brew Ha Ha! in the Colony Plaza because his son owns it! And it is the best!!!). Chuck thinks a lot about how to be a bold, courageous, good troublemaker in a confusing, increasingly wild world.



BIOGRAPHY OF OUR SPEAKER ON MAY 31

Jessica Frombach is a Licenced Massage Therapist, Reiki Master/Teacher, and Sound Healer. She has been serving the community through her business, Divine Healing, for over 10 years. She encompasses the mind, body, and spirit in her wellness practice and teaches about mindfulness, self care, and creating balance in one's life. She offers both individual and group healing sessions, Reiki classes, intuitive guidance, monthly sound meditations, women and all people's community circles.



THE SPECIAL COLLECTION FOR MAY IS CEASEFIREPA EDUCATION FUND

Firearm suicide is the leading form of gun violence in PA. While firearms are used in a small percentage of suicide attempts, they make up a significant majority of fatalities. The result: firearms are responsible for more than 900 suicides every year in Pennsylvania.

CeaseFirePA Education Fund works to address this issue as part of their Common Agenda to End Gun Violence. Please donate generously. Use the small brown envelopes in the collection basket to make a donation. Thank you.

For more information visit: <https://www.ceasefirepa.org/issues/firearm-suicide/>

Welcome to Awakening Curiosity

Theme Discussion for Sunday, May 17, 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 May is *Awakening Curiosity*. Information on the introductory reading will be sent in the *UU Erie Flame* prior to May 17. Here are some ideas we will discuss. Hope to see you there!

1. During childhood, what one or two things were you most curious about? How do you see an echo of that in your life today?
2. Has being curious ever come at a cost for you?
3. How has approaching mistakes with curiosity rather than shame healed you and helped you heal others?



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 UPDATE



As of April 27, we have only received 36 pledges for a total of \$92,210. We are over \$60,000 short of our goal. We expect about 30 more pledges to come in. If you haven't returned your pledge, please do so. The Finance Committee must make a budget recommendation to the Board in May. Thank you for your support!

SPRING 2026 HIGHWAY TRASH REMOVAL PROJECT

Our first highway trash pick up project for 2026 is scheduled for Saturday, May 2, at 10:00 AM. Hopefully the weather will be cooperative.

As always, we will concentrate on Perry Highway from top of the hill crest (south) north to the intersection where Perry Highway and Old French Road meet.

If we have enough people we will continue north on Old French Road to Arbuckle (about 0.5 mile) and Arbuckle to East Gore (about another 0.5 mile).

Also, PENNDOT recommends that all participants view their safety awareness video. Here's the link:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL90uZRd80y1MsNXqdsH0Ghgc6ZCRvIBr1>

Disposable safety vests (they ARE flimsy, so bring your own if you have a better one), gloves, pick-up devices (again, if you have your own you are welcome to bring them), bags are provided. Maybe donuts as well.



SAVE THE DATE

Our annual Corn Roast will take place on Sunday, August 23, at Presque Isle, Beach 1 Pavilion. Note the change in location. More information to follow.



WELCOME ERIC DYE

our new outreach coordinator. Eric comes to us with years of experience in social media, photography, and digital marketing. He currently serves as Digital Specialist at the Erie Art Museum and owner of ETDPhotography. His work focuses on building thoughtful, data-informed marketing strategies that help organizations connect more meaningfully with their audiences. He has worked with other non-profit organizations, and we look forward to his help to get our UU message across to more of our neighbors in the Erie region. Listen for upcoming public service announcements on WQLN radio and if you use Facebook or Instagram, watch for more ways to engage

THANK YOU TO THE HOSTS OF OUR MAY 10TH POTLUCK LUNCH

Steve Sullivan, Kat Wolper, Andrew Greene and Rosann Barker

SOUND BATH MAY 31ST AFTER THE SERVICE

The guest speaker, Jessica Frombach, will perform a sound bath at UUerie after the service on May 31st. The suggested donation is \$20. Bring a yoga mat, pillow, or grab a chair and come experience the deep vibrations work with your life energy source or qi. Come and reset your body, mind, and spirit with the sounds of gongs, chimes, and singing bowls. It is truly a wonderful experience.



Voices of **RESISTANCE**
Revival

COME SING WITH US!

Wednesday, May 13, 6pm

Presque Isle Rise Up is hosting a Resistance Singing group. Anyone can join to learn simple songs and chants that will be used at protests and vigils. A listening ear and spirit of community are vital, a great singing voice is not required.

The practice sessions happen at different places in the community. We are proud to host this session right in our sanctuary.

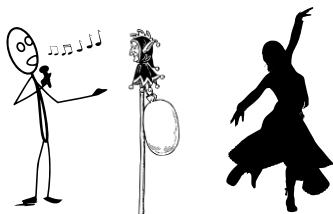
SEARCH TEAM UPDATE

The UUA search cycle for the typical church year ended in March. Ministers and churches were matched for start times, usually in August. We have had several candidates who expressed interest in our congregation, most of whom we spoke with during virtual interviews. We were very interested in one candidate, but our salary range was not high enough to be competitive with other congregations. She let us know we were not being considered. Other candidates were not suitable for our congregation because they lacked the skills the congregation prioritized or relocating to the Erie region was not possible or practical for them.

Since we are at the end of the UUA search "season", our congregation's profile will be kept on the search website for those ministers new to the search process or those who were not matched during this process. This is an open search process, and we continue to receive inquiries from interested potential ministers. Your search team continues to be diligent in the steps that will lead to our next minister.

Members: Nanci Lorei, Leigh Kostis, Mike Balsan, Ann Bomberger, Beth Guldan

The UUCE Talent Show!!!



Saturday, June 6, 7-8 pm,
at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie
7180 Perry Highway

This is a fund raiser: We're asking \$5 donation for all attendees.

We will have a rehearsal right before the show (please arrive early on June 6 for a rehearsal).

We will also have baked goods for sale as part of the program.

Questions? Call Dan Tingley 814-746-8633

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).
What's on Your Mind Zoom Gathering.....every 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 7 PM.
Creativity Matters.....Second and Fourth Wednesdays from 6:30-8 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.
Narcotics Anonymous.....Wednesdays at 7 PM.
Atheist and Agnostic Community.....Fridays at 7:00 PM.
Alcoholics Anonymous.....Saturdays at 8:30 AM.
Game Day Afternoons.....Third Saturday of each month 1-4 PM.

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes Thursday, April 17th, 2026 6:30pm

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

Absent: Diane Guthrie

Check In

Chalice lighting

Call to Order **Approval of [March Minutes](#)**

Motioned: Michael Secoded: Beth

[Finance Report](#) (Nanci to be at May and June Board meetings for budgeting discussion.)

[Committee Reports](#) (via Survey) go over issues for Board

[Communications Report](#)

[Search Committee Report](#)

SEEC hasn't done a report in several months. They haven't been meeting. **Action step: Chris will reach out to Kat to schedule a meeting.**

-The Pastoral Care committee is concerned about people in the congregation falling through the cracks.

-Caring Committee: -Our committee would like to talk about the initial outlay of money that is required to purchase the food for the meals. **Action Step: Kelly will reach out to Ginny to clarify their needs and set up some kind of financial procedure with Nanci if necessary.**

-Bobbie's installation is on May 3rd. We will ensure there are nice snacks available.

-Stewardship Campaign: We need someone to call people and ask them about their pledges. **Action Step: Kelly will contact Leigh and let her know that Kelly and Dixie will make some calls.**

-We have hired a new outreach coordinator.

Old Business

1. Action Item: T-Shirts: Waiting for Nanci to make the requested modifications to the designs.

2. Committee business:

a. Social Justice update *Chris reached out to Erie Gay News about us and is waiting for a reply. Chris has asked for a table at the Pride event this summer.*

b. Personnel Matters

Nour Alsaffan had her baby! We have retained Annette to deep clean and get rid of accumulated items.

3. Leigh Kostis has a letter from Marcus asking for two volunteers for their food pantry, and consider MLK as a special collection beneficiary.

-We need information about specific times and days when people are needed, so the congregation can be informed.

Action: Kelly with reach out to Leigh to see who will work with Marcus.

New Business:

1. Do we want to ask Terry to be our **[Minister Emeritus?](#)**

Motion: To ask the congregation to honor Terry Kind by asking her to be our Minister Emeritus, if she is interested. If she is interested this will be brought to vote at the June Congregational Meeting.

Motioned: Dixie Seconded: Chris Passed.

Action Step: Kelly will contact Nanci and Pat to reach out to Terry to ask her.

2. Chris Brown would like to use the kitchen as she starts her baking business. She recused herself and left the meeting so that the board could discuss it.

The board's proposal:

- a. She shows she has a basic registered business, either an LLC or a sole proprietorship.
 - b. She would carry her own liability insurance.
 - c. We would prefer to evaluate the agreement after an initial 3-month contract with the intention of renewing for another 3-months
 - d. Responsibility and costs of health inspection would be hers.
 - e. She needs to detail how much space she is asking for for storing things, before we give approval.
 - f. She could also use some of our kitchen equipment.
 - g. She would use the kitchen when there are no other conflicts, using the church calendar.
 - h. She will pay \$75 a month for the first three months.
3. Planning for the possibility of not having a minister for the next year.

We chose a date for Council meeting for Saturday, June 13th at 10am. Action Step: Board Members, please mark your calendars to attend this meeting. This will be a forum to consider how we fill the ministerial gaps if we don't get a minister. Hopefully the outcome will be some proposals to present at the congregational meeting.

There will be "a la carte" options coming to the UUA search portal. It is fine for the Pastoral Care Team and Living Worship Team to reach out to ministers we have a relationship with to provide Sunday services and/or pastoral care leadership on a part time contractual basis with the clear understanding that if we hire a minister, we will not need their services.

Next board meeting date – Thursday, May 21, 2026 6:30 pm., meet in person if possible.

Upcoming Events:

Game Day, Saturday April 18, 1:30 - 4:00pm

Bobbie's installation service on Sunday, May 3 during the service

Adjourn: Motioned: Marcella Seconded: Michael Adjourned at 9:04



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.

May Birthdays
01 – Tom Schlaudecker
05 – Carol Smith
09 – Steve Henry
13 – Hannah Olandrewaju
20 – Deb Haire
27 – Beth Guldan
30 – Melanie Hetzel-Riggin
31 – Caroline Rhodes

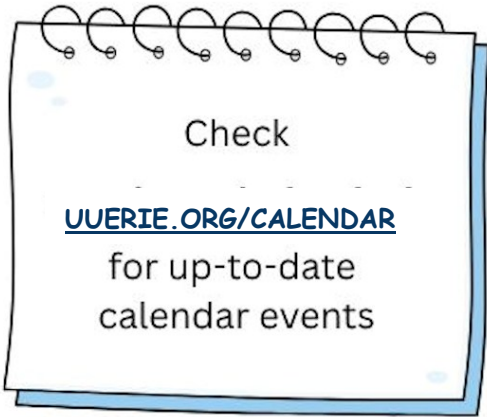


Please join our Facebook page, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie! Here you can find Sunday Service announcements, upcoming events, conversations, words of inspiration and much more." For additional information, please contact Kristin Maguire at (kmaguire626@gmail.com)



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 June issue is Friday, May 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:
April 5 – *The Possibility of Peace* – Liz Yount – 44 in person - 6 virtual.
April 12 – *The Power of Collaboration* – Kyra Taylor– 41 in person, 8 virtual.
April 19 – *Embracing Our Earth* – Rev. Jo Green – 41 in person, 5 virtual.
April 26 – *Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations* – Josh Brown – 32 in person – 10 virtual.