



The Newsletter of the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton

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Sunday Service 11 a.m.

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## Sunday Services

**February 1** *The Gift of Tongues: Mother Tongues and Other Tongues*, presented by Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes, two-time nominee for the Governor General's Literary Award for Translation. What is it like to live in more than one language? What can we learn by reading and listening to languages of reverence and resistance? Elder-Gomes will talk about how moving through varied poetic landscapes became a spiritual journey.

**February 8** Affiliate minister, the Reverend Mac Campbell: *Set Yourself Free*. Just what is this thing we call "forgiving"? Some make it into a duty, some add extras to it (like forgetting), some claim it is a simple and easy step to take. Join Rev. Mac Campbell as he cuts away these and other misconceptions. His experience is that forgiving is neither easy nor quick, but it does hold great potential for self-liberation.

**February 15** *Canadians and Same-Sex Marriage*. Former MP Andy Scott will present on the important role of citizens in the arena of public policy, and how that affected the country's debate on same sex marriage.

**February 22** Unitarian minister, the Reverend Ray Drennan: *Nourishing Our Roots*. Our living Unitarian Universalist Tradition finds its source in many places. How can we possibly speak of who we are in a convincing manner if we are unfamiliar with these sources? Today we will look at our first and most distinguishing source; namely Direct Experience. After the service, Rev Drennan will lead a workshop on this topic.



## Imbolc Greetings



Brigid's Cross

May our pagan friends enjoy a colourful and joyous Imbolc Sabbat. While most of the rest of us are fascinated by the major solar festivals, the solstices and the equinoxes, most pagan traditions hold the intermediate festivals as the more significant.

In more benign climates than ours, Imbolc is the earliest date when one might expect the early bulbs of spring to flower so at least one variant of the sabbat remains in popular culture as Groundhog's day.

One of the Celtic names by which the virgin maiden Goddess is known is Brigid and it was as this she was appropriated into the Catholic pantheon as St. Bridget whose feast day is coincident with Imbolc.



## Snow & Warmth in South Carolina

The last few winters have seen us spending some time in the Myrtle Beach area to get away from snow and ice and frigid temperatures. Surprise number one: two inches of snow fell in our area two days ago! Who would have thought it? The cold arctic mass that has been giving Canada such grief reached south, even to Florida, this winter.

Since our arrival on New Years Eve, we have reconnected with the local UU All Souls Waccamaw Church. Many

congregants remembered us from last year and we were warmly welcomed back. The UUASW, named after the local Waccamaw River, resembles our own fellowship. Various speakers present each Sunday, and an active religious education program keeps the several children interested. Small groups are also a part of their program.

The Church is affiliated with the national UU Association and consists of about 65 members. This year is the 20th anniversary and they have recently purchased an old house on one acre of land to renovate as their permanent church home. We participated in the work party last week to clean out the house. They hope to have the building in order for fall services. This fellowship was started by a group of retired people who missed their home congregations up north. Three of the original members still attend, what they refer to as their "Church in a Box". They have not had a permanent home in all this time so all supplies, including the pulpit and the keyboard; have had to be carried in each Sunday. Services are held in the winter months only, due to massive tourist traffic jams in the summer.

This is a caring and generous congregation. One member recently lost everything in a fire and within a week, another member had offered a condo for a temporary residence. The congregation donated over \$1500. plus toys and clothes to help the family members re-build their lives.

The presentations for January's services have ranged from an in-depth analysis of changes needed in the local political system, foreign aid projects in Malawi, a spirited discussion on the meaning of "Truth" in our lives and, this Sunday, an atheist will talk about the breaking down of prejudicial barriers in public life. Prior to the Sunday service, an adult education group meets, much as we do with our small groups, to study and discuss topics from the UU "Tapestry of Faith" program.

Surprise number two: Sharon was asked to lead the 9:30AM adult group last Sunday. I wonder why? It is a very welcoming group indeed that would ask a stranger to lead an intimate discussion about spirituality. It warms our hearts to have found another fellowship so similar to ours. Should you travel away from home, I would recommend that you also check out the Unitarian Fellowship in the area you are visiting.

We feel renewed in spirit with the contacts we have made, and we look forward to seeing "all y'all" in April.

John van Abbema



## Children's Program

The Children's Program Committee has decided to take on a children's community service project. I have attached the letter to the editor from the Daily Gleaner that in-

spired this effort. The children are being asked to help in this community service project to raise their awareness about people helping people. We are asking members and friends of our congregation to collect clothes, linens, coats, drapes, and blankets, to donate to the New Brunswick Association for Community Living. We ask everyone to bring their donations to the Fellowship. I have attached the Jason Carr's letter to the editor dated Jan. 14/09. This effort will continue until March 2009. The children will report their progress to the congregation during announcements at the Sunday Morning Services.

"The New Brunswick Association for Community Living works on behalf of children and adults who have an intellectual disability and their families..." It is a provincial non-profit organization. "In New Brunswick there are about 22,000 people who have an intellectual disability..." The association receives on the average 100 calls a month for support.

Haifa Miller

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*Daily Gleaner, Wed. Jan. 14, 2009.*

*Letters to the Editor*

*Help us reach our goal of 8,000 bags*

*Re: Clothing donations*

*How would you like to help make a positive change in someone's life? here's your chance.*

*The New Brunswick Association for Community Living works on behalf of children and adults who have an intellectual disability and their families, and we truly change lives and change communities each day.*

*In New Brunswick there are about 22,000 people who have an intellectual disability and we receive on average 100 calls a month for support.*

*Since we are a provincial non-profit organization, it is up to us to fund our organization through fundraisers, projects and donations. Our Community Collection Program is one way, and it is vital to our existence.*

*We collect re-usable clothing and household items which generate the funds needed to allow us to reach out and offer support. We are reaching out to you to ask for your help as we must reach a goal of collecting 8,000 bags by March 2009. We especially need clothes, linens, coats, drapes and blankets.*

*Donations can be made at any of our orange donation bins or by calling us at 1-866-NBAACL-4U. A complete list of our donation bin sites can be found at [www.nbaacl.nb.ca](http://www.nbaacl.nb.ca).*

*You can also organize a clothing drive at your work, church or service club. By taking five minutes to collect the items in your closet you no longer need, you will be directly helping change lives and change communities.*

*Jason Carr*

*Director of strategic initiatives NBAACL*



## F'ton Arts & Learning



We're celebrating Valentine's Day early ...

Fredericton Arts & Learning is presenting its Inaugural Grand Piano Concert at the Charlotte Street Arts Centre on Saturday, February 7, 2009 at 7:30 pm with special performance by Peter Allen. Tax receipt is available. We hope that you will be able to attend this event as we celebrate the acquisition of our new grand piano.

### Peter Allen

Concert pianist, composer and educator

February 7 - 7:30 p.m.

Inaugural concert on the Centre's Yamaha Grand piano

*Brahms*  
*Chopin*

*Haydn*  
*Rachmaninoff*

\$50 adults, with a \$30 tax receipt; \$15 student, with no tax receipt. Reception to follow. Tickets available at the Centre and at Peter Roberts downtown. Proceeds will help maintain the piano.

Hope to see you there.  
Laura Chatterton  
Administrative Assistant  
Charlotte Street Arts Centre  
Phone: 454-6952  
www.fal-inc.com



## Candlemas Greetings



Presentation of Christ  
*Hans Holbein the elder*

May our Christian friends enjoy the celebration of Candlemas. In the Roman Catholic Church, the Presentation is the fourth Joyful Mystery of the Rosary. In the Eastern Orthodox Church, it is one of the twelve Great Feasts.

According to the gospel, Mary and Joseph took the baby Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem forty days after his birth to complete Mary's

purification after childbirth, and to perform the redemption of the firstborn, in obedience to the Law of Moses.



## Note from Hospitality

The Hospitality Committee has quite a few plates and dishes in our Fellowship Kitchen which have been left after congregational events. Would you please check the Butcher Block counter in the kitchen to see if any belong to you. Items that have not found an owner will be added to our next Yard Sale.

Sheila Moore



## Solstice Sunrise



A small group of hardy souls greet the sunrise

picture courtesy Janet Crawford

A mystery to the ancients (although one suspects the shamans and priests had a good deal better knowledge of the geometry of the solar system than they let on to their congregants), peoples of high latitudes have always paid close attention to the apparent motion of the sun northward and southward in the sky as the seasons advance and our cultures are replete with myths and stories to explain why the giver of light and warmth abandons us in Winter. Concern rises with the possibility that this year the sun may keep going and abandon us forever and is replaced with joy and celebration as the southward journey slows and, ultimately, stops to begin the northward trip.

We now know that the solstice is a simple event of planetary geometry when the plane formed by dropping perpendiculars from the axis of the Earth's rotation to the plane of the ecliptic becomes coplanar with the centre of the Sun. With modern technology, we can mark this moment to the minute. We can even explain by the eccentricity of the Earth's orbit why the earliest sunset (by about two minutes at our latitude) occurs about ten days before

the Solstice and why the latest sunrise by about the same amount is about ten days after.

All this knowledge, however, becomes moot when that first dawn after the Solstice becomes a glowing crescent on the horizon and our voices hush to let the drums lift the Sun during the couple of minutes it takes the crescent to become a fiery ball clear of the horizon. For a few minutes, our spirits soar with those of antiquity and time collapses.

Tony Fitzgerald



## RE Express PLUS!



Religious Education Resources for kids, families & congregations Available at the Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF)

Looking for high-quality religious education resources for your congregation? RE Express Plus offers tools to create a complete RE program for children and families, or to creatively expand a larger program.

**Resources, plans and projects to build your religious education program**

**Free to CLF members**

(not sure if you're a member? call 617-948-6150 or email [bmurray@clfuu.org](mailto:bmurray@clfuu.org) to ask)

\$129 annual fee for non-members at

[www.clfuu.org/re/express.html](http://www.clfuu.org/re/express.html)



Each month RE Express Plus subscribers receive via email:



**CLiF Notes: A Curriculum for Families and Small Groups** With a session for each week including opening and closing words, centering, activities, discussion topics and more. While

designed for smaller programs with multi-age groups, CLiF Notes can be adapted for use in families, age-graded classrooms; used by churches that have two Sunday services, with a smaller program at one of the service times; or for programs which incorporate monthly worship for children of all ages.



**RE Index of Resources** This searchable index will take you to hundreds of CLF religious education resources available on the Web. Search by age, topic or more to find curriculum ideas, Web links, craft ideas, stories from uu&me and much more.



**KidTalk Web page for kids** With links to activities and information about holidays around the world, as well as featured people from UU history, social justice projects, spiritual practices,

ways to practice our principles and a forum for kids to ask questions on religious topics, each month KidTalk provides a way for kids to connect to UUism, and for parents and religious educators to glean great ideas for religious education.



**REsources for Living** Each month CLF minister for lifespan learning, the Rev. Dr. Lynn Ungar, writes a column inviting kids (and grown-ups) to reflect on matters from how to celebrate holidays to what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist.

To subscribe to RE Express Plus, or to learn more about the Church of the Larger Fellowship, contact the CLF: [www.clfuu.org](http://www.clfuu.org) [clf@clfuu.org](mailto:clf@clfuu.org), 617-948-6150

All proceeds from the sale of RE Express Plus support the many ministries of the Church of the Larger Fellowship.



## Mahashivratri Greetings



On the 14th day of the dark half of Magh (Feb 23, this year) the great night of Shiva is celebrated. On this day the devotees of Shiva observe fast.

He creates and destroys, he sustains the world, he at times obscures by his power of illusion (maya), or offers grace to the suffering world. These are the fivefold activities of Siva, symbolised by the five faces of

the god (Pancanana). He sees the past, the present and the future by means of his three eyes (Trilocana). To save the earth, he drank the poison and his throat became dark-blue (Nilakantha). A moon's crescent round or above his central eye (Candrakshara), clad like an ascetic with a tiger-skin, he holds a trident (Pinaka) in his hand; he rides the bull Nandi. Some of his images represent him as a four-armed person-age, two of the hands holding a battle-axe (khadga) and a deer, the two other hands in poses signifying assurance of safety and liberality; in some other representations, he carries a bow, a thunderbolt, an axe, a skull-capped staff, a drum.



## CUSJ

Are you a Closet Social Activist?

Did you know Unitarians are renowned as social activists? Do you harbour a secret desire to be playing a greater role

in righting social injustices, but you just don't have the time? Or are you perhaps less aware than you'd like to be as to why there are so many homeless people in Canada, or why Canada has become an environmental pariah, or how we could obtain a sustainable socially just economy in our country?

If so, join Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice. CUSJ is the social justice arm of our denomination. It is affiliated with, but distinct from the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC), which allows CUSJ to lobby governments without jeopardizing the CUC's charitable status.

All CUSJ members receive JUSTnews, the organization's newsletter. From it you can learn what other Unitarians are doing for social justice from New Brunswick to B.C. Some articles may make your blood boil at the lack of compassion of some of our politicians and bureaucrats, but others will make you chuckle, and you will read occasional good news too.

For social activist-news junkies there's the CUSJ e-list, where you can pick up much of the news you'll never read in the mainstream press.

Membership fees are what you can afford, but as a guide, CUSJ's costs are about \$50 per membership household. For some members this is too much, but others willingly pay more and make up the difference. To join, pick up a copy of JUSTnews (every congregation receives several copies), and complete the membership form on the back page, or simply send a cheque (made out to CUSJ) with a request for membership and your name and mailing address to Bob Stavely, c/o CUS Membership, P.O. Box 40011, Ottawa, ON, K1V 0W8.



## Come to Church Anyway!

Last Sunday morning I picked up the phone in the office at the Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. After I said, "Good morning, Unitarian Church," a woman's voice said, "Good morning! Can you tell me what the topic is this morning?"

Uh-oh.

I thought real fast and said, "The topic is, 'COME TO CHURCH ANYWAY!' Come no matter what the topic is, because your church needs you and you need your church, and it doesn't matter what the preacher's going to say!"

I was the preacher that morning, and I knew it was true.

The woman patiently waited while I finished my enthusiastic pitch, winding down by lamely adding, "Um, the topic is actually 'On Resilience.'"

"Thank you," she said, and hung up. I'm glad she had a good sense of humor and was nice enough to greet me

enthusiastically at the coffee hour after the second service. I had told the story to the congregation as an introduction to the Offering and she was a big enough sport to get a kick out of it, and to thank me for urging her to "Come Anyway!"

Sometimes I wish we could do away with advertising sermon topics in advance altogether and just say for every week, "Today's sermon is called COME ANYWAY." Sermons are living things. They are a response to our life together and may wind up taking a very different direction than what the preacher originally advertised. You never know.

Come anyway. The church needs you. You are, in fact, the church. Worship services are very consistent around here: The Music Director and choir prepare beautiful music, the lay readers are terrific, the Children's Message is adorable and meaningful, the ushers and the flowers gracious and lovely, the coffee hour sumptuous, and your minister does her utmost best to craft a relevant, thought-provoking sermon. But for my money, the most powerful moment that we share comes in the silence right before our meditation. How does that happen? It happens simply by virtue of all those people in all those pews, breathing and being together as one in the spirit of hope and healing, gathered not by common belief (amazingly enough) but by common values and common need. Come be a part of that. Come "Anyway!"

Victoria Weinstein  
minister at First Parish Unitarian,  
Norwell, MA

Source: Original, published October 13, 2005.

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## Tu B'Shevat Greetings



*Tu B'Shevat*, the 15th of Shevat on the Jewish calendar (February 9<sup>th</sup>, this year), is the day that marks the beginning of a "New Year for Trees." This is the season in which the earliest-blooming trees in the Land of Israel

emerge from their winter sleep and begin a new fruit-bearing cycle.

We mark the day of *Tu B'Shevat* by eating fruit, particularly from the kinds that are singled out by the Torah in its praise of the bounty of the Holy Land: grapes, figs,

pomegranates, olives and dates. On this day we remember that “Man is a tree of the field” (Deuteronomy 20:19) and reflect on the lessons we can derive from our botanical analogue.



## Winter Indoor Games Party

The Children’s Religious Education Committee is planning a fun filled afternoon for the children on Valentines Day from 1:00pm to 4:00pm. This event is open to all children, their family and friends. Bring your favorite games (board games, card games, whatever you love to play at home) and a treat to share. The committee will provide beverages. We look forward to seeing you there! For in-

formation, please call Kate Manuel at 363-5391.



## Goods and Services Auction

Please reserve the evening of Saturday, March 14, for this major fund raiser. Bring friends. Auction starts at 7PM at the Fellowship. Light refreshments will be served.

Goods for the sale may be left on the counter in the wet bar off the library or make arrangements with Nancy Beltrandi. If dropping off an item, please indicate clearly that it is for Nancy for the auction and from whom it is being given. Descriptions of services should be sent to Nancy. See the January Touchstone for a description.

This space wants your material!