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Sunday Services

- June 2** The Reverend Priscilla Geisterfer
- June 9** Heather Lunergan
- June 16** Janice Ryan *Bridge to Unity*
- June 23** Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes *Feminist Child Rearing*
 Feminism and motherhood are sometimes seen to be contradictory. The derogatory term "mommy wars" suggests that breastfeeding and attachment parenting are irreconcilable with achievement outside the home. In this talk, I will be exploring goddess spirituality, individual transformation, and the social changes that arise from feminist mothering.
- June 30** John van Abbema *The Wisdom of Confucius and His Disciples*
- July 7 - August 25** *Summer Schedule* The Fellowship will be open for Sunday Service at the normal time.

Members of the congregation are invited to contact the chair of the Sunday Services committee for available dates if they have an idea they would like to pursue as a Sunday Service talk. Such talks will be posted on the web site if the editor is advised ahead of time.



Notice of AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton will be held following the regular Sunday Service on June 23, 2013, at 874 York Street.



Tea and Scones

Come and join me for some scones made using "Jon Oliver's Remarkable Sunday Scones" recipe

Tuesday, June 4th 2pm – 3 or so
 The Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton

Janet Crawford



Women’s Pot Luck

The next women’s pot luck will be held Friday, June 21st. Sharon van Abbema will host the gathering at her home, 143 Morning Gate Drive. We gather at 6 PM and eat at 6:30 PM. Topic for discussion - Talk about a place where you visited .. or lived .. or holidayed... during your lifetime .. that you really enjoyed .. that had great meaning for you and is memorable even to this day. For further information contact Joan Brewer at 455-5169



Men’s Discussion Group

The men’s group will meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the month making it June 19th for the next meeting.

No set discussion topic to allow our intellects to roam freely. Coffee if anyone feels the need and cares to do something about it. Tea, ditto. All men welcome.



Fredericton Homeless Shelters

*Passionate about homelessness in our community?
Want to use your time and talents to make a difference?*

The Fredericton Homeless Shelters is seeking caring and engaged citizens to join our Board of Directors. Formed to support the Shelters' mission to the homeless among us, the Board is responsible for planning, advocacy, community outreach and fund-raising. We want a Board of Directors whose members - whose shared vision, insights and experience - reflect the larger Fredericton community.

So, if this invitation interests you, please be in touch by June 17th ... eallen@stu.ca OR call 451-3475.



From your President

Welcome to June! Spring has been particularly spring-like this year, with lots of sunshine and then lots of rain – which have certainly made all the growing things shoot up! The magnolia tree at the Fellowship was especially beautiful this year, and I know that a few people took pictures of it to prolong their joy – both the joy of the blossoms and the joy of the photographers. To me, the re-emergence of the blossoms represents a fresh start.

Business of the Board:

We had a lot of good feedback relating to Rev. Kitsy Winthrop's visit the last weekend in April, including the workshop, the Sunday morning service, and the opportunity for pastoral care visits (she calls this her 'dance card'). We will be considering inviting Kitsy back, certainly next Spring, but perhaps in the Fall as well. Based on the Financial Report prepared by Daniel Ruiz as Treasurer, the Fellowship is pretty well on target, and expenses for the big budget items such as denominational and Sunday services, buildings and grounds, and the Children's Program are aligning with the projected expenditure.

Unfortunately we are losing Daniel as he and his family are being transferred to the Toronto area in the summer. Daniel has been a real asset to our Fellowship, particularly as interim Treasurer, and his presence will be missed. We wish him and his family all the best for the future, and hope to see him again some time.

Since I was helping Daniel as best as possible while he was treasurer, I have picked up the treasurer's duties for the time being. Please bear with me as I learn the systems that George DeMille has put in place. There are a number of things that we have to do as an incorporated charitable organization, which I am working on figuring out. (P. S. If you are interested in financial paperwork, the treasurer's

role is always looking for a volunteer!)

The main order of business for the Board this month was preparation for the upcoming Annual General Meeting in June. Reports from the current committees form part of the Agenda, and, as a reminder, we need the **reports from Chairs of committees to be sent to Betty Lou Daye by the 8th of June**, so they can be included in the overall Report.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The business of the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton runs from July to June each year, and therefore we have our **AGM** close to the end of June. Because of the Canada Day holiday weekend, we'll hold it on the **23rd of June**, right after Sunday Service.

The business of the AGM is primarily to elect a new slate of officers for the Board of Directors and as Chairs of standing Committees. Unfortunately the nominating committee that was struck at the last Board Meeting felt they could not do the work effectively as they felt too close to the recent upheaval within the Fellowship (as reported in 'From your President,' Touchstone, May 2013). A new Nominating Committee has been formed, chaired by Haifa Miller, along with women elders of the UFF: Margaret Fitzgerald, Nancy Beltrandi and Genevieve Laloux. They have been working hard to come up with a slate of officers who will take us through the next year with a fresh perspective. A training session will be held to help incoming directors and committee chairs understand our By-laws, policies and procedures, as well as their roles and responsibilities.

Our By-laws state that members of the Board can only stay in one position for a maximum of two terms. Each term is one year long; so, this is my last term as your President, after which I automatically become Past-President, a role which Joan Brewer has so capably filled and supported me as President. Thank you, Joan, from the bottom of my heart.

The other business for the AGM is to vote on any amendments to our By-laws if they arise. This year we are proposing that the role of Secretary-Treasurer be split into two separate roles, as overall it is too much work for one volunteer. A copy of the proposed amendment will be circulated with the formal announcement and agenda for the AGM, at least seven days prior to the **AGM on the 23rd of June**.

Other items of note

We have seen a number of new faces and returning members and friends of the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton over the last many weeks. It is wonderful to see such interest and attendance. For those whom we haven't seen for a while, welcome back! If you wish to become more involved in the activities of the Fellowship, there are lots of opportunities for volunteers to participate.

People are still basking in the success of this year's Spring

Fling. Well done, Spring Fling team!

The women's pot luck continues to be offered on the fourth or last Friday evening of the month, and has been well attended. These suppers and discussion evenings are held either at a host's home, or at the Fellowship on York Street.

The men's group which convened a couple of months ago is continuing, meeting on the third Wednesday of the month in the Library at the Fellowship building. Following the success of the Keswick Ridge Historical Society Book Sale which was held in our garage at 874 York St, the men's group are considering whether a similar event would be a worthwhile fund-raiser for the UFF.

Consideration is being given to starting up additional small group ministries, or circle conversation groups as we call them. If you are interested in participating in such a group, you could mention it to me or Glenna Hanley and we will collate names.

Every couple of years or so we hold a 'New U' orientation program for new and returning Unitarians / Unitarian/Universalists. This set of workshops helps to answer questions about the Fellowship and Unitarianism that new members and friends have. There will be plenty of notice for any upcoming 'New U' sessions.

Our Fellowship is affiliated with the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC). Our Eastern Region representative is Kelly McDowell, with whom I have been in contact on numerous occasions this year. The CUC works with your Board to support our Fellowship in whatever way we require, including help with the proper handling of issues as well processes and procedures to promote a healthy congregation.

This is my last 'From your President' letter for Touchstone. I have learned a great deal serving in this role, and have come to understand and value the Fellowship and its people more deeply than I ever knew when I attended the UFF (on Charlotte Street) when I was growing up. I have many people to thank- the members of the Board for their unfailing support - Joan Brewer, John van Abbema, Tom Hanley, Gail Moore, Betty Ponder and Betty Lou Daye as well as Kelly McDowell from the CUC, Haifa Miller for her care, the Chairs and members of committees, and everyone else who has selflessly contributed to the ongoing functioning and health of our Fellowship – your work is very much appreciated! We are a strong Fellowship, and I have been very privileged to serve as your (huggiest) President for the past two years. I am looking forward to working with the incoming Board as Past-President as we move this Fellowship forward over the upcoming term.

Respectfully submitted
Sheila Thompson
President, Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton



Child Dedication Ceremonies

Borrowed in large part from a publication of the Unitarian Congregation of Saskatoon and adapted for the Lay Chaplaincy Committee by Tony Fitzgerald.

Each night a child is born is a holy night–

A time for singing
A time for wondering,
A time for worshipping.

– Sophia Lyon Fahs



A child dedication or naming ceremony is one of the rites of passage which your Lay Chaplains may have the pleasure to perform. A rite of passage is a way of celebrating an important transition in life and of allowing friends and family to join in the celebration.

While some see child dedication as filling a role similar to baptism in Christian churches, it is important to remember that the U*U religion does not acknowledge original sin and sees no need to wash it away. A god that would condemn a child for the actions of its parents or ancestors is unworthy of worship.

The emphasis in a child dedication is on family and community who promise to make a safe space for the child in which the child will be free from indoctrination and allowed always to question. When ready, the person that the child becomes will be free to follow their own religious path, wherever that path takes them. This emphasis on freedom and choice can often lessen the concerns that non-U*U relatives may have about what they may see as a non-traditional and possibly cult religion.

The specific goals of a child dedication may include:

- Affirming the individuality and dignity of the child
- A parental commitment to bring the child up in the community and in accord with their values
- Celebrating the presence or arrival of a child in the family with hope and joy
- Celebrating an older child's involvement or welcome into the congregation
- Introducing the child to the congregation
- Recognizing the friends and family who will contribute to raising this child
- Giving the congregation an opportunity to commit itself to support of the child and family
- Optionally, celebrating the child's name and having a chance to explain its significance to everyone

The ceremony is a joyous event and may incorporate music, gesture, movement and symbolic objects as well as the spoken word. There are many sample scripts which

may be used or from which the parents may develop their own. A common and beautiful symbolic gesture uses a rose from which the thorns have been removed to brush a small amount of water on the forehead if the child is an infant. The symbolism evokes the essential nature of water and the beauty of life.

A child dedication is usually but not necessarily part of a Sunday service. The family, Lay Chaplain and Sunday Services committee would arrange to find a suitable service into which the ceremony could be incorporated. It can happen almost any time: when a child is born or adopted, or some time after the family joins the congregation, at the time of a visit from faraway relatives, or on a special occasion for the family.

If you are interested in having a child dedication ceremony for your child or children, please speak to one of the Lay Chaplains.



We dedicate our minds and hearts to the spirit of this child.

–Shelley Jackson Denham



Litha Ritual

Days are long and warm, gardens are planted, and the air is heavy with the scent of flowers in bloom. It is the time of Litha, also known as Summer Solstice. For most people in the northern hemisphere this marks the beginning of summer, but for many Pagans and Witches summer began at Beltane and now we are at Midsummer, the time when the sun is at the height of its power and soon to descend again into darkness. Midsummer and Yule are the dividers between the light and dark halves of the year, the waxing and waning, the planting and harvesting times. We gather in community to celebrate the gifts of the sun, the heat, the growing food and nourishment. It is a time when many people renew their vows to the deities. Often couples who handfasted at Beltane the previous year will make deeper commitments to one another. Traditionally herbs are harvested during Litha and used to make charms for protection and healing.

Litha is also an erotic and sensual time of year, with the Goddess pregnant with new Life. (In some traditions she is seen as being pregnant with the God who is born again at Yule.) The fey, drawn to this sensual energy, are very much with us during this season and often inclined towards mischief-making. Just think of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream". Many choose to leave gifts of honey and cream out for the fey at Midsummer.

You are welcome to join us on June 22nd for an open ritual to acknowledge Litha and the turning of the Wheel. Email gfwgfw@gmail.com for more information.

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Please send articles to touchstone@uff.ca