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Sunday Service 11 a.m.

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Sunday Services

Child care is available and all are welcome.

January: Our theme is Growth and Ageing

January 3 *Reflections on Growth and Ageing*: Jo-Anne will lead an informal service about Stages of Life. Participants are invited to read a poem or share a reflection about the stage of life they are in.

January 10 Theme Sunday: *Growth and Ageing*. Multi-generational Service. Service Leader: Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes. Children, youth and adults will share their stories about the advantages and the challenges of being the age they are.

January 17 Lay Chaplaincy Service. Sheila Moore and Tony Fitzgerald will talk about the work Lay Chaplains do. Tony, the Fellowship's current Lay Chaplain, will share some of the memorable moments he has had in officiating at ceremonies and rites of passage.

January 24 Service Leader: Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes, Speaker: Reverend Mary Tingley. Reverend Tingley has been focusing her ministry on palliative care, and will talk about some of her experiences working with people at the end of life.

January 31 Joan Brewer and Sheila Moore attended the Stream on Covenant at the Atlantic Cluster Gathering last October. At this Service, they will share some of what they learned about how our Fellowship can move forward in creating our own Covenant.



2016 Budget

Preparation of the 2016 budget process wraps up this month with these important dates:

Jan 10 - Committee chairs must have their budget requests to treasurer Myron Hedderson by this date. Email to Treasurer@uff.ca and copy to the board secretary Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes at Secretary@uff.ca

Jan 17 - Regular board meeting at which the board members will review and discuss the proposed budget for 2016. Committee chairs or a representative should attend.

Jan 31 - Annual budget meeting of the congregation. IMPORTANT that all members attend so that we have a quorum in order to pass the budget.

Submitted by Glenna Hanley, President



Women's Pot Luck

The next Unitarian Fellowship women's pot luck will be held Friday, January 8, 2016. Judi Day will host the gathering at her home, 280 Dunns Crossing Road. We gather at 6 PM and eat at 6:30 PM. The topic for discussion is "Your Holiday Season". Share the things you liked about it and / or the things you could have done without. For further information contact Joan Brewer at jebrewer@rogers.com

Happy New Year



YAYAS-BE

The Youth and Young Adults Spiritual Beings' group will meet at January 13 and January 27, from 7:00 to 8:30 pm in the library. In January, following the stages of life theme, they will be engaging in reflections on milestones and transitions, creating a spiritual time line, and doing some small group ministry. They will also be planning fundraisers for youth to travel to CanUdle. This group

is for Youth 14 to 20 years of age; the Wednesday sessions are open to Junior Youth (12-14) as well. Contact Anneke by Facebook, join the Facebook group, or email Jo-Anne at eldergomes@yahoo.com for more information.

Going the extra mile...

There are four youth in our YAYAS-BE group who want to go to CanUUdle (the national gathering of UU Youth) in May. The 2016 CanUUdle is being held in Vancouver, and Vancouver is lots and lots of miles away. Do you have some extra miles (Aeroplan, Air Miles, points) that can help us get there? Can you help us go an extra couple thousand miles to see our people? If so, please let Haifa know! (Watch for our fundraisers this month, too.)



Reflections on Aging

Our theme for January is Growth and Aging. How we think about the stage of life we are in depends on so many things... our age, our health, our philosophy or belief about life and death, our personal situation and how we feel about the many transitions we go through. Children look forward to every birthday and can almost feel their bodies getting taller by the day and their minds expanding as they discover something unexpected or manage to accomplish a new skill. For many of us past early adulthood, the prospect of getting older is not something that welcome so enthusiastically; at best we try to cultivate a kind of acceptance that it is the way life is. We forget to embrace the joy of moving forward, of advancing in our lives and deepening our beings, growing more human every moment. Here are some thoughts about aging to reflect on throughout the month.

“Elderhood brings a gift of time for thinking and reflecting, for integrating what we bring from our deep self and our lived experience. Embracing our own wisdom will help us stay focused and connected to the preciousness of life and help us deal with the “fast forward” life around us. To be more than a physical body is our birthright. Each of us is also a spiritual being who deep within holds faith, hope, and love. Using our spiritual energy and compassionate awareness as tools, we can proudly embrace the tee shirt slogan that says, ‘Aging Is the Ultimate Extreme Sport.’”

☞ From *Hindsight, Humor, and Hope, Valuing Elderhood, A Tapestry of Faith*

“Today and every day, we are still evolving, still developing our inner self, which we call our spiritual self, our soul, the essence of our being. Think about our developmental process as parallel to the life cycle of an apple tree. Beginning with a small, sprouting seed, it develops into a young sapling tree, then a mature tree. With good moisture, sunshine, and nourishment it develops and grows. At the same time, it is withstanding storms, disease, and

drought. Each spring the tree grows new leaves and flower buds that open into flowers. After a while the petals fall off and in the flower centre a tiny bump begins developing into a luscious apple. The fruit has become wholesome food for someone and also holds within it more seeds that, when planted, continue the cycle of life. Likewise, we too were nourished and grew, withstood storms and drought, and hold wisdom that can nourish others both now and in future generations.

☞ From *Hindsight, Humor, and Hope, A Tapestry of Faith*

“Ever since the age of six I have had a mania for drawing the forms of objects. Towards the age of fifty I published a very large number of drawings, but I am dissatisfied with everything which I produced before the age of seventy. It was at the age of seventy-three that I mastered the real nature and form of birds, fish, plants, etc. Consequently, at the age of eighty, I shall have got to the bottom of things; at one hundred I shall have attained a decidedly higher level what I cannot define, and at the age of one hundred and ten every dot and every line from my brush will be alive. I call on those who may live as long as I to see if I keep my word.”

☞ Japanese painting master Hokusai, who lived to be ninety

“I am still every age that I have been. Because I was once a child, I am always a child. Because I was once a searching adolescent, given to moods and ecstasies, these are still part of me, and always will be... This does not mean that I ought to be trapped or enclosed in any of these ages... but that they are in me to be drawn on... Far too many people... think that forgetting what it is like to think and feel and touch and smell and taste and see and hear like a three-year-old or a thirteen-year-old or a twenty-three-year-old means being grownup. When I'm with these people I... feel that if this is what it means to be a grown-up, then I don't ever want to be one. Instead of which, if I can retain a child's awareness and joy, and be fifty-one, then I will really learn what it means to be grownup.”

☞ Madeleine L'Engle

“Old paint on canvas, as it ages, sometimes becomes transparent. When that happens it is possible, in some pictures, to see the original lines: at tree will show through a woman's dress, a child makes way for a dog, a large boat is no longer on an open sea. That is called *pentimento* because the painter “repented,” changed his mind. Perhaps it would be as well to say that the old conception, replaced by a later choice, is a way of seeing and then seeing again... [T]he paint has aged now and I wanted to see what there was for me once, what there is for me now.”

☞ Lillian Hellman

Wholly unprepared, we embark upon the second half of life . . . with the false assumption that our truths and ideals will serve as before.

☞ Carl Jung

Age has no reality except in the physical world. The essence of a human being is resistant to the passage of time.

☞ Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Inside every old person is a young person wondering what happened.

☞ Terry Patchett

I was writing a new program for the afternoon of life. The scales tipped away from suffering and toward open-headedness and love.

☞ Dani Shapiro

You don't stop laughing because you grow old. You grow old because you stop laughing.

☞ Michael Pritchard

The fear of becoming old is born of the recognition that one is not living now the life that one wishes. It is equivalent to a sense of abusing the present.

☞ Susan Sontag

One loses, as one grows older, something of the lightness of one's dreams; one begins to take life up in both hands, and to care more for the fruit than the flower, and that is no great loss perhaps.

☞ W. B. Yeats

Autumn, we know, is life en route to death.
The asters are but harbingers of frost.
The trees, flaunting their colors at the sky,
In other times will follow where the leaves have fallen,
And so shall we.

Yet other lives will come.
So we may know, accept, embrace,
The mystery of life we hold a while.

Nor mourn that it outgrows each separate self,
But still rejoice that we may have our day.
Lift high colors to the sky! And give,
In our time, fresh glory to the earth.

☞ Robert T. Weston

Ten thousand flowers in spring, the moon in autumn,
a cool breeze in summer, snow in winter.
If your mind isn't clouded by unnecessary things,
this is the best season of your life.

☞ Wúmén Huìkā (1183-1260); English version by
Stephen Mitchell

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes



Reflections on the New Year

The newspaper today was filled with the usual New Years items. "Dear Abby" had the following as part of her new years homily.

The Prayer of Saint Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
It is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life.

Attributed to Francis Bernadone, perhaps the most universally loved of Christian saints. The prayer expresses resolutions which, if we were all to take them to heart, might make this world a better place.

There are two aphorisms which occur to me whenever I come face to face with a prayer, especially a prayer which contains elements with which I agree. The two aphorisms express a similar sentiment. The first, from the Christian tradition, is "The Lord helps them who help themselves." The second, from the Islamic tradition: "Pray to Allah, but row for the shore." Both reflect on the ineffectiveness of prayer unless the supplicant is willing to invest the effort and make the resolve required to bring about the desired result.

As an atheist, I see no point in addressing my prayers to any sort of divine master or lord of creation. I know neither exists. Prayers, to have any sort of effect must be addressed to the command and control centres deep within my own being. Inspirational words such as prayers or poems can sometimes make impressions on our inner selves which simple logic and self-interest fail to achieve.

As Alexander Pope said: “True Wit is Nature to advantage dress’d, What oft was thought, but ne’er so well express’d”. So, a well express’d prayer can be the bit of wit that does the trick.

I do, of course, take issue with the last line of the prayer. Eternal life is highly overrated. People who want eternal life have no conception of infinity. Margaret and I were watching “*The Life of Brian*” as our New Year’s Eve activity and decided to watch some of the features on the extra DVD including the story of making the movie. A large part of the story was spent examining whether the movie was blasphemous. An imam took issue with one of the lines in the closing song “*Always Look at the Bright*

Side of Life” in which Eric Idle sings: “You come from nothing, you go back to nothing. What have you lost? Nothing!” The imam’s comment was to the effect that the soul was not nothing. While we respect the right of everyone to believe as they choose, we also want to point out that belief alone, no matter how sincerely nor fervently held, does not make something so. The things which are true are true regardless of our beliefs.

So take from the prayer of Saint Francis what you will and Happy New Year.

In fellowship
Tony Fitzgerald

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