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Sunday Service 11 a.m.

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Sunday Services

Child care is available and all are welcome.

April Theme: Stewardship / Caring for our Earth

April 24 In celebration of Mother Earth Day (April 22), Najat Abdou-McFarland and Myron Hedderson will talk about the different models a garden on our grounds could take: reaching out to different sections of the wider community, selling for market, growing for ourselves, a small- or large-scale project, a children's garden, and other options.

May Theme: Happiness

May 1 *Theme Service.* Heidi O'Donnell will lead an interactive service. Join us in conversations about how our ideas of happiness evolve throughout our lives.

May 82 Speaker: Reid Lodge. Service Leader: Najat Abdou-McFarland. Reid Lodge is a queer, transgender youth who will describe his achievements and milestones in doing advocacy work for transgender people in Fredericton and beyond. This will be the first of two services to consider happiness across the spectrum of orientation and identity.

May 152 Speaker: Cherie MacLeod. Service Leader: Najat Abdou-McFarland. Title: *A Home for My Rainbow Heart.* Mental health and well-being are the focus of this year's International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia. While various factors determine mental health, social inclusion ranks high

on the list. Please join us Sunday, May 15th as Cherie MacLeod, former National Executive Director of PFLAG Canada, shares her insight on what it means for LGBTQ people to feel disconnected from their spiritual community and what welcoming congregations can do to help bridge the gap.

May 21-May 23 The 2016 CUC National Conference takes place this weekend in Vancouver. See more details about the CUC's Annual Business Meeting elsewhere in The Touchstone. The link to watch the Sunday Worship service in Vancouver will be sent at a later date, as will details about our morning service on May 22.

May 29 *Flower Communion.* The Flower Ceremony, sometimes referred to as Flower Communion or Flower Festival, is an occasion for Unitarian and Universalist congregations to celebrate beauty, human uniqueness, diversity, and community. Originally created in 1923 by Unitarian minister Norbert Capek of Prague, Czechoslovakia, the Flower Ceremony was introduced to the United States by Rev. Maya Capek, Norbert's widow. In this ceremony, everyone in the congregation brings a flower. Each person places a flower on the altar or in a shared vase. The congregation and minister bless the flowers, and they're redistributed. Each person brings home a different flower than the one they brought. Details to come.

June Theme: Meaning in Life

June 5 Theme Sunday: *Honouring Transitions.* Service Leader: Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes



YaYAS-Bee

Youth and Young Adults Spiritual Beings

The youth group continues to meet on alternate Wednesday evenings at 7 pm. However, meetings will be held only on May 4 and June 1 because... CANUUDLE! We are talking about the Principles and covenanting.

We'd like to thank all the members and friends of the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton for making it possible for five youth to attend CanUUDle in Vancouver. We are all very excited! Particular thanks to Haifa, Glenna, and Carlos for donating air miles and points, to Ed and Anne Leslie for their contribution to the Youth Fund, and to all who attended the Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser in February. We will continue to replenish the Youth Fund through bake sales after some of the services in May.

Rather than taking a break in the summer, we hope to have some fun activities for the youth and young adult members in the Fellowship and in the Atlantic region. Stay tuned for details!



Women's Pot Luck

The next Unitarian Fellowship women's pot luck will be held Friday, April 29th. Janet Crawford will host the gathering at her home, 155 Aberdeen Street. We gather at 6 PM and eat at 6:30 PM. The topic for discussion is "Personal change". We change through the years but retain some of our personal attributes through the years of change. Find a photo or an object of a time that you remember well and talk about what is the same and what has changed about you. For further information contact Joan Brewer at jebrewer@rogers.com



Goods and Services Auction

**Saturday Evening May 28, 7:00-9:00PM
(Viewing 6:30PM)**

Plans for the evening are shaping up nicely. We have 2 very friendly auctioneers willing to tease you out of your money. We have 2 separate offers of dinner for six; we have 2 separate offers of cottage get aways; we have 2 day trips, which include lunch, walking, raspberry picking, relaxing; an offer to give a bit of help with your spring cleaning; and an offer to help with your computer glitches.

If this isn't enough, we also have a large lot of interesting articles for the silent auction including some good picks for reading, and good things to munch on.

The biggest thing we need now is for you all to attend and bring a friend. That would round off our wish list perfectly. See you there.

Nancy Beltrandi
Janet Crawford
Tony Fitzgerald

Questions or to make an offer.... nahbeltrandi@gmail.com
or 459-8004



Notes from the President

March and April have been busy.

A New UU program for people who want to learn more about Unitarian and Universalism was run by Janet Crawford, chair of membership, with help and input from various other members. Six members of the youth group, Ya-Yah-Bees, and three adults took part over the course of four Wednesdays. A bonus extra Wednesday with a potluck was added to celebrate the conclusion of the course.

Three youth have decided to become members of the fellowship and a special Sunday event will take place to welcome them into the fold. A big warm welcome to Alec, Emilia and Orianna.

We participated once again in the St. Thomas University's Faith and Diversity Day on March 29. We are old hands at this now, having participated every year since it began. Thanks to Tony Fitzgerald who, as our lay chaplain, took the lead on this again this year and represented us well in a panel discussion on various issues about faith.

The event was better attended this year. That may have been due to moving it from the daytime to the early evening. A new feature was display tables for each participating religion. We had a number of people stop at our table, ask questions and pick up brochures. Thanks to Alyssa Sankey and Sheila Moore who contributed our share for a delicious and abundant potluck meal.

On the same night a discussion on the plight of refugees took place at the fellowship, organized by the UNB's centre for Atlantic Canadian Studies. The discussion was based on the book, *The Lightless Sky*, about a 12-year-old boy, Gulwali Passarlay, a refugee who escaped from the war in Afghanistan. Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes hosted the organizers and the visitors on our behalf and found it was an interesting discussion with about 20 people taking part.

(I have read the book, *The Lightless Sky*, and it gives a gruelling account of the corrupt people-smuggling industry in that part of the world and the dangerous year-long challenge this young boy faced before he finally landed safely in the United Kingdom).

On the board front we are beginning to gear up for the annual general meeting in June.

We have chosen June 12 as the date for the AGM, the election of a new board and committee chairs. Our annual potluck picnic will follow on June 19. A nominating committee of three members has been appointed. Joan Brewer, Gail Moore and Margaret Fitzgerald have generously offered to serve on the committee.

The board is considering whether or not to suspend the

children's religious education program for the summer. That decision will probably be made at our May 1 meeting.

Last month we approved Deby Nash as our new lay chaplain. The board examined the costs of helping Deby get up and running and agreed to allow some flexibility in that committee's budget.

We were eager to see Deby take part in a training program in Hamilton in April and will be assisting her with expenses. She has also offered to share in those costs as well.

On the fundraising side our first ever karaoke party was quite successful and raised \$332. The funds will be shared with the Syrian refugee family being sponsored by the Halifax Universalist Unitarian Church, and the fellowship itself.

The Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) annual general meeting is coming up May 20 to 22. As was reported before five very excited members of the youth group, Ya-Yah-Bees, will be attending the parallel youth conference. Our secretary Jo-Anne was the CUC Conference Convener and will be attending as well.

New this year is live streaming of the meetings all across the country. We are hoping to set up the streaming at the fellowship on our Smart TV so people here can follow some of the proceedings. Jo-Anne will be providing more information on that.

That's all for now. Cheers,
Glenna Hanley, president.



Movie Night

Thursday May 19th 7 pm

The Economics of Happiness – This award-winning documentary spells out the social, spiritual, and ecological costs of today's global economy. Importantly, the film also highlights the many benefits of a shift towards the local, and showcases some of the steps people are already taking worldwide

Join us as we explore the theme of "Happiness" during the month of May. Free will donations welcome. Refreshments available.



Book Review

A Book that might interest you: *The Lightless Sky* by Gulwali Passarlay.

As the news tells us of refugees shuttled back from Greece to Turkey this is a good time to read the story of a twelve year-old boy whose mother paid a people smuggler to get

him and his older brother out of Afghanistan to Europe because the Taliban was trying to recruit them as suicide bombers and the Americans had already killed five of their family as dangerous Muslims.

The boys were separated early in the trip and Gulwali was smuggled from country to country, bounced back to a previous country with heart-breaking regularity, imprisoned, abandoned by traffickers who were responsible for much of the trip and left to somehow find the representative of the smuggler paid to keep him moving and provide some cash for his survival. Travel methods included inside a truck engine, in the refrigerated part of a banana truck and on an overloaded raft that threw him into the sea. He had to make very difficult decisions about leaving friends, staying or going on, continuing or giving up. The description of "The Jungle" refugee camp in Calais is still devastatingly true.

But it's not all negative. You'll find out how the boy survived, grew, met decent people on the way, met his brother again and grew to become a valuable British resident with a university degree and a record of contributions to society that made him a choice for carrying the Olympic flame on part of its journey through Britain. There are messages very relevant to understanding something of the lives of our refugees here in Fredericton.

It is available through the Fredericton Library.

Sheila Andrew



CUC:

Online Voting Orientation and Business Meeting

Online Voting for the 2016 AGM

With only a few weeks before the CUC Annual General Meeting and Conference (May 20-23), the CUC staff have been working to live up to our commitment to provide an accessible option for democratic participation for our members: online voting.

Normally, the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton chooses its Delegates from among those who attending the Annual General Meeting. This has not been a particularly inclusive or democratic practice, in the sense that travelling to the Annual Conference and Meeting was not always an affordable option for many of our members; this would have been the case with the AGM held in Vancouver this year.

Instead, the Fellowship Board has appointed Najat Abdou-McFarland and Myron Hedderson as our Delegates. Delegates normally serve a two-year term and, along with the CUC Board members from our region and CUC Staff, provide information between the congregation and the CUC. Najat and Myron will be voting from the comfort of

the Fellowship, and interested members are invited to join them.

Congregations wishing to participate in the online voting are required to take part in an orientation session before the AGM. Our congregation has decided to participate in the orientation on Saturday, May 7th at 2:00pm Atlantic time. The orientation sessions will mimic the AGM, and the CUC suggests preparing for it the way you would for the actual AGM. Najat and Myron will set up the system at the Fellowship, and sign in together. If you are interested in observing, please let Myron or Najat know ahead of time.

The actual meetings will take place in Vancouver on Thursday evening, May 19 (discussion on the CUC Vision statement and other matters to be brought to the membership) and all day Friday, May 20. Members who would like to join our Delegates and observe the meeting can come to the Fellowship on Friday, May 20 before 1pm.

Information about the CUC Annual General Meeting and material to be discussed can be found on:

<http://cuc.ca/conference-2016/annual-meeting/>

This space wants your material!
Please send articles to touchstone@uff.ca