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Sunday Services

March Theme: *Simplicity*

March 26: Theme Service on Simplicity. We will be streaming a service from the Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax. Reverend Norm Horofker will be leading a service, including story and hymns, on the theme of Simplicity. There will be an opportunity for Fredericton participants to share announcements and Joys and Sorrows as usual. This month’s service is entitled “The Simplicity of Maple Syrup”: The religious calendars of faith traditions around the world are tied to the seasons and to the rhythms of nature. In Nova Scotia, the short period when the sweet water of the maple tree flows, marks the end of winter in a profound way. Come and be part of what we hope will be a new annual tradition in our congregation.

Note: The Celebration of Faith in Diversity will take place at St. Thomas in the afternoon, see article elsewhere in this issue

April Theme: *The Simple and the Sacred*

April 2: Service Leader: Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes. Multi-generational, interactive Service on the theme of Sacred Spaces. Children, youth, and adults are welcome to do creative activities about home, nature, and the sense of awe and wonder.

April 9: Service Leader: Najat Abdou-McFarland. Najat will speak on parks across Canada as sacred spaces.

April 16: Service Leader: Heather Lunergan. A UU Perspective on Easter, based on “What Easter Means for Unitarians,” written by leading Canadian Unitarian writer and historian Reverend Phillip Hewett for the Canadian Unitarian Council.

April 23: Service from Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax (topic will be either Resistance or Earth Day)

April 30: Speaker: Stephen Ward, on the topic of Media Ethics. Stephen Ward is an internationally recognized media ethicist whose writings and projects have influenced the development of the field in theory and practice. He is an educator, consultant, keynote speaker and award-winning author. He was a reporter, war correspondent, and newsroom manager for 14 years, covering conflicts in Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Northern Ireland before becoming the British Columbia bureau chief for The Canadian Press news agency in Vancouver and later moving to Fredericton. His current research is on the future of media ethics in a global interactive world.

May Theme: *Compassion*

May 7: Speaker: David Brown. “Beating to death non-violent communication, non-violently,” a talk based on Marshall Rosenberg’s writings on NVC, also known as Compassionate Communication.

For information on Sunday Services or to make suggestions, please write to us at Sunday_Services@UFF.ca



Women’s Monthly Pot Luck

The next Unitarian Fellowship women’s pot luck will be held Friday, April 24th. Deby Nash will host the gathering at her home, Apt 319 - 845 McLeod Ave. Parking behind the building. We gather at 6 PM and eat at 6:30 PM. Topic for discussion will be circulated later. For further information, contact Joan Brewer at jebrewer@rogers.com



Celebration of Faith in Diversity

St. Thomas University students and members of Fredericton's faith communities present our 6th annual "*Celebration of Faith in Diversity*" (CFID) on Sunday March 26th, from 1 to 5 pm in the Kinsella auditorium of McCain Hall.

This year's theme is "*Women and Faith*." Our organizers, all women, represent: the Wabanaki First Nation, the Fredericton Shambala Buddhist Community, the Fredericton Baha'i Community, the Catholic Women's League, the Maritime Geeta Bhawan Hindu Temple, the Fredericton Islamic Association, Sgoolai Israel Synagogue, and the Fredericton Unitarian Fellowship.

Come join us on March 26th and learn about your neighbours! Share with us as we celebrate our own stories through poetry and video, song and dance! The CFID is free and open to the public. There is free parking on campus, and all are invited to stay on from 4-5 pm and enjoy refreshments courtesy of our faith communities!

For further information please contact 2017CFID@gmail.com



Keswick Ridge Historical Society

"History Speaks" lecture series for 2017

112 Route 616, Keswick Ridge

Sunday April 23rd 2 – 4 pm

Chris Benjamin, author of award winning book for social justice writing, will join us to discuss his book "Indian School Road." He will speak about the Indian residential school at Shubenacadie.

Sunday April 30th 2 – 4 pm

Video presentation "Acadians of the St. John River Valley." This video explains the history of Acadian families who moved up the St. John River. Some of these families left Crock's Point and the Mouth of Keswick for Edmondston and Northern Maine in the 1700's.

Sunday May 7th 2 – 4

Well known author Gerry Parker will speak about his book "Workin' in the Woods: Toil for Timber in Early New Brunswick." His presentation will include slides about our ancestors work in the woods.

Refreshments will be available and Historical Society books will be for sale.

For further information please call:

Sheila Moore
450-9021



John Shelby Spong

Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism

This book by the Episcopalian Bishop of Newark, U.S. finds a lot of contradictions and statements in the Bible that do not make sense if taken literally. He admits some of his own dates and "facts" are debateable too. His main point is that we must view the discrepancies in light of the knowledge and attitudes of the humans who wrote them down and the times and circumstances they lived in. To use the Bible as a basis for belief, the reader must seek to interpret it in terms of the present time. For example, the pre-scientific assumptions of the Bible assumed that LGBT meant a chosen and unnatural lifestyle while modern science finds it biologically pre-decided. The bible authors also assumed a flat earth, a heaven above it and literal movement between the two. Interpreting events described with that attitude should be done by understanding the symbolism. Using the present day attitude will allow Christianity to progress towards a truer relationship with divinity.

We are also advised to consider the gap between the time when events happened and when they were written down. The earliest written material in the Old Testament was provided shortly after the death of David, at least 300 years after the death of Moses. He also explains the effects of the situation of the Jews when the major parts of the Old Testament were written: the shift from the strong control of kings to a greater role for advisors and the Jewish people, the invasions and deportations that left priests desperate to keep the Jewish people in existence as a religious unit and the protests against what was happening. This partly explains why actions and directions to humans attributed to a divine being sometimes went directly against the laws for the same humans.

The section on the New Testament starts with Paul's letters, the earliest of which was written around 48 A.D. Jesus is assumed to have died around 30 A.D. Paul obviously knew Christian teachings, but not directly from Jesus. He particularly shows the attitudes of the time in his attitude to women- expected to obey their husbands and keep quiet in church. Spong also thinks Paul shows a sense of guilt because he was homosexually inclined. This may be true, but to me guilt from his earlier persecution of Christians seems likely.

A very interesting section focuses on the contradictory accounts of the birth of Jesus and some times of his life as illustrations of factors influencing the writers of the Gospels. Mark's was the first account of Jesus's life that we have, written about 65-70 A.D. It lacks the dramas of star-lead wise men, singing angels and shepherds that don't fit modern science. Mark wrote from Rome, may have known the apostle Peter and would certainly have

known many of his followers. Accounts of Peter's attempts to walk on water and his human failure in fear suggest at least familiarity with the stories of a tradition associated with Peter. Mark wanted to build hope among Christians during Nero's persecution. He includes the story of Jesus destroying the fig tree because it had no fruit (a story that always bothered me) to show all nature must follow God's will.

Matthew was writing about 80 AD in Antioch, only ten years after the Romans destroyed Jerusalem's temple. His audience was Jews of the diaspora who wanted to be Christian and Jewish, so Matthew worked hard fitting the story of the Messiah into Hebrew texts and prophecies. Spong describes the effect of this as sometimes disastrous. This includes the Magi as attribute to the wisemen of Eastern religion and Herod's murder of the children under two. Neither of these incidents is mentioned in another gospel or in history elsewhere. He had to envisage Jesus as coming back from Egypt to fulfill Old Testament prophecies and reflect the life of Moses. The tax issue supposed to have led to Jesus's birth in Bethlehem is there to associate him with David.

Matthew and Luke also had access to the mystery Q document that may have been written as early as 20 years after the death of Jesus, but we do not know the intended audience or background of the writer.

Luke had written the Acts of the Apostles and wrote his gospel around 80 or 90 AD about 30 years after Paul's death. Luke was a master of the Greek language and lived in Caesarea on the coast of Israel where there were Greeks, Jews and strong evidence of both cultures. He was probably a gentile and wrote excellent Greek. This was after the Romans had destroyed Jerusalem so there was no Jewish centre of religion and gentile Christians were more powerful. The gentile Christians were blamed by the Emperor Nero for the 64 AD fire of Rome and persecuted again by Emperor Diocletian. There are no tales of a manger, or stable. Luke has the shepherds visiting Mary's house.

John wrote for Christian Jews wanting to remain Jewish around 90-110 AD. He was living in Ephesus where John the son of Zebedee is said to have lived. This disciple must have been a young teenager when Jesus called him and a tough old man if John met him, but again it may have been followers John talked with. Around this time traditional Roman and Greek beliefs were losing their attraction and, according to Spong, John was interpreting Jesus's life as the next step in understanding for these former believers. That's why he explained words like rabbi and may be why he wrote of so many miraculous angels, trumpets etc that might appeal to those used to these in their earlier religion.

So Spong's final message is to abandon literal interpretations of many stories and concentrate on Christ's life as a powerful example of love, affirming a reality that broke every boundary and swept over human prejudice. The

search for truth and justice must continue.

Haifa Miller says she is happy to lend her copy to anyone who would like to read it. Sheila Andrew
Submitted by
Sheila Andrew



Mr Crunchy and the basement escapade

Posted on February 12, 2017
by acalvern

***Editor's Note:** The following was submitted by allison calvern from her blog. For about a decade and a half, allison was associated with the Fellowship and she is currently working with Child Haven International in Tamil Nadu. You may find more at acalvern.wordpress.com.*

We buy our snacks in Uthiramerur, from a man in a stall near the bus station—sweets, and potato chips that are so fresh they are still warm from the hot oil they are fried in. We call the snack man Mr Crunchy; his stall is easy to find because of the swarm of people at the window. The locals shove their money past me and my Canadian wait-your-turn ways; they shout out their orders before i can open my mouth. But Mr Crunchy seems to know when it is my turn; he raises his eyebrow in my direction, the slightest of gestures, and i am paying attention.

Chips, i say, and a small box of those. I point to Kimana's and my favourite sweet, barfi. (India has cool names.)

Mr Crunchy already knows my order; his big brown hands reach into the mound of chips, grabbing fistfuls and filling the flimsy plastic bag, which he places on the scale, ignoring the reading. He fills the bag so full he can barely seal it. Then he fills a small box with those yummy cubes of ghee and sugar. The box reads: "Recommended Usage of Sweets / Milk – Ghee Sweets / Do not Refrigerator / Consume of the Same day Of Purchase!" The cost for our snacks is 120 rupees, ~\$2. We promise not to "Refrigerator," and are very happy to "Consume of the Same day Of Purchase."

One day, after we got our treats, somebody came out of the side door, intent on bringing us into the building. He gestured to me, Come sister, come sister, and i followed right away, without consulting Kimana. He seemed to be a brother or other relative of Mr Crunchy.

The tiny stall sometimes has four men in it, maybe even five—the excesses of India are not reliably counted. They are big, burly men: one frying the chips; one or two moving stock or doing something i need more time to figure out; the old guy, Indian guru type, long hair, bare chest, white dhoti, handles the money; and my Mr Crunchy doles out the product. They are successful businessmen, and one of

them has taken it upon himself to lure us inside.

This is how they kidnap tourists, get an idiot blond to follow some man to the basement of a snack stall in the middle of a busy street, and then whisk her away never to be seen again. Kimana thought she had better follow me, either to save me from disaster or to get caught in the same adventure. The thing is, Jackie had come with us to town, another intern, who is less likely to enjoy being alone in Uthiramerur than we are. She had just gone down the lane for a moment while we bought snacks, and now Kimana and i were heading down the rabbit hole, without her. We walked not on steps, and not on a ramp, but on a corrugated cement incline, dark and damp, but coming into light as we descended.

We arrived at a magic place, a shrine, three walls of devotion, fully decorated in tiles depicting gods and goddesses, every square foot covered, and the clean, open space lit with a dozen oil lamps, six flames in each one. The floor was elaborately carved and coloured in tile and mosaic; garlands of flowers adorned, well, everything. Across the corridor from the shrine was a narrow atrium crammed

with big plants in awkward cement planters. Ubiquitous Tamil Nadu dust and grime somehow were made lovely by the greenery, by the light coming in from the sky, and by the love and attention to this place of worship.

Wow.

Our guide indicated that we should enter the shrine, and so we stepped onto the floor and sat down. I was not sure where to put my grubby backpack in this clean and vulnerable place, and so i held it on my lap. The man disappeared and in a minute reappeared with an amphora of water. (I've always wanted to use that word, amphora, in a sentence, and here i am describing the shape of the jug—i am not sure About it though.) Right about then, Jackie showed up.

How did you know to come down? we asked.

Everybody on the street knew to send me here, she said.

And so, we Canadians cannot possibly get lost in Uthiramerur; people watch us, examine us, keep us in line. We did not get kidnapped; we got enshrined.



MAGGIE'S FARM REVIVAL

AND DOLAN'S PUB

349 KING ST FREDERICTON

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

MEALS ON WHEELS OF FREDERICTON

PRESENTS AN EVENING OF FUN AND MUSIC

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26TH, 2017

7:00 PM TO 10:00 PM

50/50 DRAW | DRINK & FOOD SPECIALS | SILENT AUCTION

FOLLOWED BY DOLAN'S LATE NIGHT ORCHESTRA

\$ 10.00 COVER

(PROCEEDS TO MEALS ON WHEELS)

GOOD TIME | GREAT CAUSE | SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY

