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Sunday Service 10:30 a.m. Web Site: <http://www.uff.ca> Email: office@uff.caNewsletter editor: touchstone@uff.ca

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Sunday Services

December Theme: Presence

Sunday, November 26, 10:30am: *GFAW, the Greater Fredericton Area Witches* The Fellowship makes its space available to GFAW as part of our outreach effort and in exchange for a free will offering. GFAW use the space for some of their ritual events and other activities. Members of GFAW will share with us a bit about who they are and what they do.

Sunday, December 3, 10:30am. *Multifaith Service: Presence and Wonder.* The loss of daylight and warmth during the winter season has given rise to sacred ceremonies in many religions and cultures. At this multifaith celebration, we will read words and stories from many traditions to deepen our sense of presence and connection with the natural world, and to remind ourselves that we share our sense of wonder and awe with people of many faiths. Service Leader is Jo-Anne Elder Gomes.

Sunday, December 10, 10:30 am. The term "historical Jesus" refers to attempts to "reconstruct the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth by critical historical methods," in "contrast to Christological definitions ('the dogmatic Christ') and other Christian

accounts of Jesus ('the Christ of faith')." Heather Lunergan will introduce us to the basic research and scholarship surrounding one of the most intriguing mysteries of humankind.

Sunday, December 17, 10:30 am. *Carol Sing!* Join our pianist, Margaret Fitzgerald, selected soloists from our congregation and others as we "sing in" the holiday season. There will be music from various traditions and sources. All are welcome. Warm cider will be served, along with holiday treats.

Sunday, December 24 *No Service* to allow everyone family time.

Sunday, December 31, 10:30am: Watch for news of our Open House on Sunday, December 31, as we say goodbye to 2017 and look ahead to 2018. The theme for January is "Beginnings," so watch for more information about that in the next TouchStone, on our website page, or on facebook.



Children's Program

The children's program is currently running on a trial basis, with attendance ranging from 1 to 8 children. The program that we decided to pilot is called Riddle and Mystery, and is part of the "Tapestry of Faith" curriculum that can be found on the UUA website: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/riddle>. This is specifically aimed at a grade 6 audience, which made sense given the age of our most regular attendee. The main theme of this program is "the big questions". So far, we have had sessions on three of the big questions.

1. Where do we come from? The focus was on answering this multiple ways: our parents, our city, the universe, etc.
2. What are we? We began by answering this individually, and moved to describing what we as UU's are.
3. Where are we going? This involved learning about humanist ideas in comparison to deist ideas. Can one person make a difference? How?

For December, we are going to pause the big questions in order to celebrate some December holiday traditions, beginning with the Dutch tradition (prior to Sinterklaas on the 5th) and the German Christmas tree. If you have suggestions, or would like to help make this inclusive and multi-cultural (Hanukkah, Solstice, etc.), please contact Alyssa.

We'll continue with the Riddle and Mystery program in January and would very much like to have help in the way of adults willing to pick a session and do one or two Sundays from January to June. There are 16 sessions in all, so plenty of material to pick and choose from. I've found that you can only do about half of the material in the time we have, so a single session could be done over two consecutive weeks.



Third Thursday - Blue Christmas

Thursday, December 21st, 7 until 9 pm. Join Najat Abdou-McFarland for our annual Blue Christmas event. In her words "Fellowship members and friends will learn about "the dark night of the soul" experience in various religious and spiritual figures. There will also be time for meditation and reflection. Bring friends who you think may be interested."



Membership Directory

The Membership Committee will be up-dating our Members and Friends Directory for the New Year. If you have a new address, e-mail address or phone number please send the new information to: Sheila Moore – smoore@nbnet.nb.ca.



LEXOPHILE just for fun

1. You can tune a piano but you can't tuna fish.
2. To write with a broken pencil is pointless.
3. No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.
4. If you don't pay your exorcist you can get repossessed.
5. I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.

Thanks to
Sheila Moore



Joys and Concerns

Congratulations to Bing Yang on completing his PhD. Bing is working in Shediac NB.

Sheila Andrew is recovering very well with the help of Tim from her recent cataract surgery.

Bill Chernoff is recovering very successfully from his recent hip surgery



Reflections on Presence

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes

Presence can mean two very different things. Being present in the moment means being aware of who you are and what you are experiencing in the here and now, without dwelling on the past or focusing on the future. In many religious traditions, however, Presence is a transcendent sense of otherness, a connection to a world beyond our own, a feeling that something beyond ourselves enters our beings and our lives.

The living tradition we share, as UUs, allows us to reconcile these two definitions. Our First Source invites us to draw inspiration from "direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder affirmed in all cultures which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uplift life." Whether we name the transcending mystery God or the Spirit of Life or the Cosmos or Goodness or Love, we experience it through reality, through our physical bodies, our individual reason and emotions. Our sense of wonder when we look up at the clear night sky, the connection we feel when someone gives us their full attention, the discovery of the deeper meaning of an experience, fill us with a sense of Presence.

"Normally, we do not so much look at things as overlook them."

– Alan Watts.

"The moment one gives close attention to anything, even a blade of grass, it becomes a mysterious, awesome, indescribably magnificent world in itself."

– Henry Miller

"To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour..."
From "Auguries of Innocence"

– William Blake

"We walk past a thousand, thousand natural miracles ev-

eryday, from the sun climbing in the sky to the arc of birds seen out our windows. Those miracles are there waiting for us to see them, to notice them and, most importantly, to find our delight in theirs.”

– Adam Frank

“I think it makes a huge difference when you wake in the morning and come out of your house. Whether you believe you are walking into dead geographical location, which is used to get to a destination, or whether you are emerging out into a landscape that is just as much, if not more, alive as you but in a totally different form. And if you go towards it with an open heart and a real watchful reverence, that you will be absolutely amazed at what it will reveal to you. And I think that that was one of the recognitions of the Celtic imagination: that landscape wasn’t just matter, but that it was actually alive. What amazes me about landscape, landscape recalls you into a mindful mode of stillness, solitude, and silence where you can truly receive time.”

– John O’Donaghue

“At the end of the day: do others feel loved in your presence? This is the spiritual bottom line.”

– Masin Kipp

“When you love someone, the best thing you can offer is your presence. How can you love if you are not there? The most precious gift we can offer others is our presence. When mindfulness embraces those we love, they will bloom like flowers.”

– Thich Nhat Hanh

“Here’s the deal. The human soul doesn’t want to be advised or fixed or saved. It simply wants to be witnessed – to be seen, heard and companioned exactly as it is.”

– Parker Palmer

“Let us not look back in anger, nor forward in fear, but around in awareness.”

– James Thurber

“Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity”

– Simone Weil

“Attention, taken to its highest degree, is the same thing as prayer”

– Simone Weil

“Knee-deep in the cosmic overwhelm, I’m stricken by the ricochet wonder of it all: the plain everythingness of everything, in cahoots with the everythingness of everything else.”

– Martha Nussbaum

Videos

Interview on Presence

“Presence is removing judgment, walls and masks so as to create a true and deep connection with people or experiences.”

– Amy Cuddy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFllLB6yQrU>

Settling Into Presence

Eckhart Tolle offers guidance for settling into presence and resting in the depth of an “unfilled” moment.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WreEewZGTWI>

Spiritual Exercises

1. The first exercise comes from an invitation by Herman Hesse: to try, just once, to really look at the sky or the air around you, to use all your senses to fully appreciate it.

“Just try it once – a tree, or at least a considerable section of sky, is to be seen anywhere. It does not even have to be blue sky; in some way or another the light of the sun always makes itself felt. Accustom yourself every morning to look for a moment at the sky and suddenly you will be aware of the air around you, the scent of morning freshness that is bestowed on you between sleep and labour. You will find every day that the gable of every house has its own particular look, its own special lighting... (Or enjoy other) small joys, perhaps the especially delightful one of smelling a flower or a piece of fruit, of listening to one’s own or others’ voices, of hearkening to the prattle of children. And a tune being hummed or whistled in the distance, and a thousand other tiny things from which one can weave a bright necklace of little pleasures for one’s life.”

– Herman Hesse

2. Einstein is quoted as saying that we can live as if nothing is a miracle or as if everything is a miracle. Which way were you encouraged to live as a child? Was your sense of wonder and curiosity dismissed or valued? Do you remember feeling that parts of your universe were magical or mysterious? What is your experience of the spiritual dimension of your life right now? What fills you with a sense of awe or mystery?



Potluck Party for Sharon and John van Abbema

All Welcome!

Date: Saturday, December 9th 2017

Place: Unitarian Fellowship

Time: We will gather at 1 pm and eat lunch at 2 pm

Please RSVP Haifa Miller at hmiller@nbnet.nb.ca



Advent Carol Festival

The Annual Advent Carol Festival held each year at St. Paul's United Church (corner George and York) will take place on Wednesday, December 6 at 7:30 p.m. Local church and community choirs will present a program of new, as well as familiar, Christmas music. There will also be an opportunity for the audience to join in the festive singing. A freewill offering will be received with proceeds going to the CBC's Feed a Family Campaign.



Jackie Webster, ONB

One of the founding members of the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton, Jackie Webster, was recently invested into the Order of New Brunswick, becoming a recipient of the province's highest honour.



According to the ONB website: "The award honours current or former long-time residents of New Brunswick who have demonstrated a high level of individual excellence and achievement in any field, having made outstanding contributions to the social, cultural or economic well-being of New Brunswick and its residents."

At an investiture ceremony at Government House in Fredericton on Nov. 8, Lt. Gov. Jocelyne Roy Vienneau conferred the honour saying: "Jacqueline Webster is receiving the Order of New Brunswick for her impact on the social and cultural life of New Brunswick through her contributions in the field of journalism."

Webster was one of 10 recipients, including three others with ties to Fredericton. Measha Brueggergosman, a world-renown opera singer; Susan Chalmers-Gauvin, CEO of the Atlantic Ballet Theatre and daughter of the late Dr. Everett Chalmers for whom the regional hospital is named, and Richard Currie, a fellow Beaverbrook Scholar and the driving force behind the Currie Centre on the Fredericton campus of UNB.

A framed plaque of the Order of New Brunswick will share a wall of fame with the Eldred Savoie Award for Excellence and Dedication to New Brunswick Journalism that Webster received in 2011. She is also a recipient of, among other recognitions, a Beaverbrook Scholarship and World University Service of Canada Scholarship, as well as the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal.

The ONB celebrations were spread out over two days, one of the highlights being a reception in the new wing of the Beaverbrook Art Gallery with newly appointed Gov. Gen.

Julie Payette.

For more information about the Order of New Brunswick, you can visit:

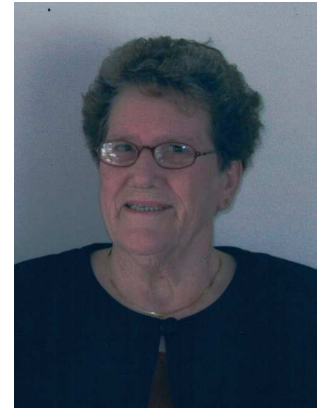
http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/corporate/promo/order_of_new_brunswick/2017_recipients.html

Submitted by Allison Brewer
Nov. 23, 2017



Mae (Bertha) Hedderson

Mae passed away November 14, 2017, at the Charles Curtis Memorial Hospital, St. Anthony after a lengthy illness.



She will be sadly missed by son, Roland (Janet), daughters, MC Gillingham, Millicent (Leslie) Tucker, and Tena Earle; grandchildren, Petula, Tara, Marlene, Myron, Shavonne, Desmond, Andy, Randy and Chad and great-grandchildren, Tyler, Brooke and Ian; brothers Art (Violet) Hill and Abe (Selma) Hill and sisters Ethel Hedderson, Louise (Fred) Bussey and Doris (Joe) Hooper; brothers-in-law Chesley Button, Carl Hillier, Bill Coish and sisters-in-law, Marie Hill, Faye Hill, Nellie Hedderson and Millie Button as well as many other extended family members.

Mae was predeceased by her husband Augustus, son Eric, grandson Ian, son-in-law Ray Earle, daughter-in-law Nancy Hedderson, parents Jacob and Phoebe Hill, sisters Gertie, Sybil and Violet and brothers Frank and Clayton.

Mae raised her family in the traditional Newfoundland way - working hard alongside her fisherman husband, raising cattle, berry picking and growing vegetables. She played a vital and active role in her community, her church and the Orange Lodge throughout her whole life. Mae loved to travel and experience new adventures, new cultures, new countries and gathered friends and nourished friendships wherever she went.

For additional information:

<http://kmffuneralhome.com/obituaries/2017/11/14/hedderson-mae-bertha>



Krisna The Reservoir of Pleasure

author: Bakteedanta Swami Prabhupada.

This 28 page paperback gives us some insights into how religions can change and come closer to each other. It was written by a Hindu living in America. We are told that the way to pleasure is to get beyond material pleasure, work through the pleasures of human love for others, for community and country and seek unity with Krisna who is all creation. He may come to us as a superior in this world or as one who works for us, like the charioteer in the Hindu sacred text Mahabharath. He may require us to do things that seem wrong, like fighting against family or giving false information when that is part of our job.

However the search for “Krisna consciousness” can still continue in the life where this is required and can get to the point of union where no reincarnation is needed or where the reincarnation is as a teacher to guide others. The only way given to achieve this is by chanting “Hare Krisna, Hare Krisna, Krisna Krisna Hare Hare. Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Hare Hare Rama Rama”. This will work for people of any religion, bringing them close to the love of their god and thus perfecting the individual’s life.

There are obviously problems for other religions, with the idea of reincarnation for example, or that bad things may have to be done, though plenty of wars have been fought in hopes of a greater good. We even have Buddhists in Myanmar presumably believing that in their treatment of Muslim Rohingya. Hindus would presumably also have problems with the idea of only one god being the way to ideal pleasure. Even the author himself writes that there are five steps to reaching union with Krisna but never lists them. However the power of chanting is certainly recognised in many religions and getting beyond the self is the aim of all.

I will put this one in our library for a while, My apologies for the underlining I committed in the booklet while pulling this review together, Sheila Andrew



First Unitarian Church of Toronto

One of the largest UU congregations in Canada, the First Unitarian Church of Toronto, streams its Sunday services live on Sunday morning, starting at 11:30 a.m. You can access the videos shortly afterwards by going to: <https://www.youtube.com/user/firstunitarianTO>

Toronto First is following the same themes as we are, with a few exceptions. Its service on November 19, 2017, on Identity, is of particular interest, as it invites us to look more deeply at the identity of our congregation and our denomination in the future. Entitled Identity: Where Are We Going?, it includes a homily by Reverend Shawn Newton which is a wonderful complement to Reverend Linda Thomson’s work with us on growth and choices. You can find the video of this service here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0h1Nj1ygGM>



Pizza Buffet Fundraiser



Monday December 4th, 5 pm - 7 pm

Please join us for our 3rd annual Pizza Delight fundraiser!
All you can eat pizza buffet for just **\$10 + tax** per person.

Kids 10 & under are **\$6 + tax**.

Selection of pizza slices

Garlic Fingers

Salad

Fountain drinks (free refills)

Dessert Pizza

When ordering, you must specify that your order is for Meals on Wheels

\$4 from each special ordered goes to Meals on Wheels.
243 St. Mary’s Street on the corner of Maple Street.

Bring your friends and an appetite!



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