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Upcoming services

The theme for April is Transformation.

April 1 Easter Fools: Fun for All Ages. Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes.

Every now and then, Easter Sunday lands on April Fools’ Day. We will explore the lighter side of the holiday, which is all about turning things upside down, in a multigenerational service that will include stories, jokes, and funny songs that reveal the truth and the foolishness of UUs. In laughter we find our common humanity, through which celebration and healing can occur. Humour, fun, and play are essential to our physical, mental, and spiritual health, and we should take them more seriously!

April 8 *Transformation and the Five W’s.* Heather Lunergan

April 15 TBA

April 22 *Earth Day* Guest Speaker: Carl Duivenvoorden; Service Leader: John van Abbema

Carl works as a speaker, writer and sustainability consultant – sharing ideas and helping people and organizations learn how they can save money, energy and our environment. This will be his fourth visit to the Unitarian Fellowship, and his talks are always thoughtful and engaging.

April 29 *Maple Syrup Communion* Jo-Anne and Carlos Elder-Gomes

Making maple syrup is both an example of transformation and an analogy for our inner transformation. The First Nations peoples in this part of the world have long recognized that the right balance of heat and cold at a single time of the year leads to the natural bounty of sap, a life-giving source of minerals and sustenance after a long winter of scarcity. We will talk about the customs of sugaring and how it relates to our inner journey, and share a special kind of communion to celebrate a local food and ancestral traditions.



Board Meeting

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors will be held Sunday, April 8th at 11:45. All regular meetings of the Board of Directors are open to members of the Fellowship, and to invited guests or friends.



Monthly Women’s Pot Luck

The next Unitarian Fellowship women’s pot luck will be held Friday, April 27th. Sharon van Abbema will host the gathering at her home, 16 Tanglewood Close. We gather at 6 PM and eat at 6:30 PM. The topic for discussion will be circulated at a later date. For further information, contact Joan Brewer at jebrewer@rogers.com.



Thoughts on Transformation

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes

What a funny year! Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent fell on Valentine’s Day, which added to the guilty pleasure of chocolate hearts, and Easter will be celebrated on April Fool’s Day. The trickster will be taking the form of bunnies, hens, and eggs, as well as fish (Poisson d’avril) in France. Anyone for a chocolate-covered fish?

On the other hand, I think Transformation—our theme

for the month—always involves the unexpected. Surprise! Your life is no longer travelling along this familiar part of the road, it is now taking you into uncharted territories. And lots of times you really don't want to be there, do you? Despite all the manifesting you do and/or the rational choices you make, the Universe / fate / That-Which-Others-Call-God / random circumstance has a way of taking over and moving you to another state of mind (sorry, province of the mind).

There's an ad on TV for the Jeep Compass. You may have seen it:

"In 15 feet, turn left.
"Recalculating.
"Go straight to a steady job.
"Recalculating.
"Stay single until you're 34.
"Recalculating.
"Toe the company line.
"Recalculating.
"Be a vegan.
"Recalculating..."

I love it because it is an optimistic and even humorous way of looking at changes that can be annoying or devastating when they actually happen. It puts changes in a different perspective: "Love, hope, happiness. Whatever your destination, there's a million beautiful ever changing ways to get us there." I might add, our inner compass leads us to odd destinations as often as our GPS misleads us. And sometimes they're better than the places we've planned to go.

Another example of this attitude, also from popular culture (can you tell I *live* on TV and Facebook?) is a meme that reads: "When something goes wrong in your life, just yell 'Plot Twist!' and move on."

Can you relate? I have had lots of plots twists and had to recalculate plenty of times, and I wish I could have this light-hearted reaction as my go-to attitude. Usually I take much longer to process things, but I am lucky to have a foundation of hope to sit on when I sit with my emotions.

Some changes are, of course, wonderful surprises. Many more do not start out that way, but turn into something that feels like they were meant to be. Even if they do not delight you, awful events can be instructive. No, I don't believe "whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger..." I do believe that horrible things can be instructive in teaching you what to avoid, and I do believe that we develop deeper empathy, understanding, and humanity by delving into our inner resources.

We start our month of Sunday Services with Easter and finish it with Communion, but both of these services, along with the others, call on us to look at things in a different way. Easter Fool's Day will invite us to look at the most holy day on the Christian calendar with humour. Is this irreverent? Holy fools have existed for centuries,

predating Christianity. They "acted the fool," lived in a state of extreme spiritual obsession, and performed strange acts to reveal corruption or religious infidelity. Similar to some Old Testament prophets and the Cynics of Ancient Greece, "Christ's fools" reject the values of the day and serve as a warning to the Church or society to turn back to God. Using humour to reveal unpopular truths can be extremely effective. Stand-up comics who mock racism and homophobia, political cartoonists who exaggerate the foibles of political figures, absurdist playwrights... Rick Mercer and Samantha Bee teach me as much about society as many serious commentators.

Easter is, indeed, a day when everything turns on its head. Death becomes life, sin leads to salvation, the day of crucifixion is marked as "Good" Friday. The course of human existence encounters an amazing plot twist. Unitarian Universalists may struggle with the resurrection story, but most of us have no trouble at all with the reality of second chances, transformative events, and metaphor. Maybe all Easter means is that it is time to recalculate.



Spirit of Life

One of the favourite songs in many Unitarian congregations is "Spirit of Life." Many know the first verse, but there is a second verse. We'll sing both verses on a Sunday morning soon. Singing the Living Tradition #123 by Carolyn McDade

Heather Lunergan

Spirit of Life, come unto me.
Sing in my heart all the stirrings of compassion.
Blow in the wind, rise in the sea;
Move in the hand, giving life the shape of justice.
Roots hold me close; wings set me free;
Spirit of Life, come to me, come to me.

Spirit of Love, come unto me.
Deep in my soul all the mystery of creation.
Teach me to care, peace let there be;
Lead me to truth, showing forth the paths of wisdom.
Roots hold me close, wings set me free,
Spirit of Love, come to me, come to me.



Third Thursday

April's Third Thursday on April 19, 7 pm, will be hosted by Joan McFarland. For all peace loving people, the Unitarian Fellowship will be showing the film, A Bold Peace, about a country that has chosen not to have a standing army.

A Bold Peace: Costa Rica's Path of Demilitarization. This is a story of Costa Rica's 65-year long experiment in living

without a military, told through the lives of former presidents, current leaders, scholars, activists, and ordinary Costa Ricans. It is a bold peace: riveted by a history of two military incursions into this country with no army; inspired by the unseemly leadership of this small nation that led peace efforts in Central America; and moved by courageous initiatives as this tropical country envisions living carbon neutral by 2021.

The trailer may be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Re2eMRix4g>



Famous Last Words

***Editor's note:** The following was submitted for publication in good faith. I am publishing it in order to make the following general comment about items purporting to have been said by famous people (especially Einstein or, now that he is dead, Stephen Hawking) or just making fantastical claims about anything. Check the reference and verify the validity! The Snopes website is dedicated to verifying the authenticity of various internet memes. A simple Google search for "snopes steve jobs last words" found the quote below and rated it as FALSE. It will also tell you his actual last words as reported by his sister: "Oh wow. Oh wow. Oh wow."*

Read the article for whatever wisdom you may glean from it, however, remember that citing Steve Jobs as its source to give it greater credence was an act of dishonesty and, in my opinion, discredits its contents.

Steve Jobs' alleged Famous Last Words:

"I reached the pinnacle of success in the business world. In others' eyes, my life is an epitome of success. However, aside from work, I have little joy. In the end, wealth is only a fact of life that I am accustomed to.

At this moment, lying on the sick bed and recalling my whole life, I realize that all the recognition and wealth that I took so much pride in, have paled and become meaningless. You can employ someone to drive the car for you, make money for you but you cannot have someone to bear the sickness for you. Material things lost can be found. But there is one thing that can never be found when it is lost – "Life".

Treasure Love for your family, love for your spouse, love for your friends...Treat yourself well. Cherish others. Whether the house we live in is 300 or 3000 sq. ft. -loneliness is the same.

Therefore, I hope you realize, when you have mates, buddies and old friends, brothers and sisters, who you chat with, laugh with, talk with, have sing songs with, talk about north-south-east-west or heaven & earth, that is

true happiness!!

Five Undeniable Facts of Life:

1. Don't educate your children to be rich. Educate them to be Happy. So, when they grow up they will know the value of things not the price.
2. Best awarded words in London ... "Eat your food as your medicines. Otherwise you have to eat medicines as your food."
3. The One who loves you will never leave you for another because even if there are 100 reasons to give up he or she will find one reason to hold on.
4. There is a big difference between a human being and being human. Only a few really understand it.
5. You are loved when you are born. You will be loved when you die. In between, You have to manage!

NOTE: If you just want to Walk Fast, Walk Alone! But if you want to Walk Far, Walk Together!

Six Best Doctors in the World

1. Sunlight
2. Rest
3. Exercise
4. Diet
5. Self Confidence
6. Friends

Maintain them in all stages of Life and enjoy a healthy life.



Care of The Soul

A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life.

Thomas Moore

The book is heavy going, so I split my synopsis into two parts. I wrote it for one of our daughters and her husband who wanted to know what it said but had no time to get through it. This contemporary Thomas Moore trained as a monk for many years before deciding to become a lay psychotherapist. He is strongly influenced by the writings of Karl Jung, Robert Hillman and Nicholas de Cusa, amongst others. Moore's book was a great help to a friend of my daughter who, according to another friend, fought off a nervous breakdown, beat back patches of deep anger and took his life back by replacing Prozac with photography. He became a very successful artistic photographer and also used the book through his later years with cancer.

To Moore, the soul is the relationship of the individual to everything and it is on a path of constant questioning without ever assuming that the answers are final. So the soul is more than self or intellect. Spirituality is getting beyond this to something greater. Depth is the dark shadows that go with many experiences. The basic message of the book is that shadows and the mud-like depths that go with them must be explored to find light beyond and treasure beneath. We must keep on questioning and creating.

This can find the positivity allowing the soul to continue its journey, sometimes back from the wrong path and on to the right path. Finding the treasure may only require digging and exploring the dark, but it may require the use of heat. Both can be difficult. Sacredness describes the parts of experience that are on the right path.

The shadows and depths are found in everyday life. Childhood and family life may give us images of what we should be as young people or as parents or what those in our family should be and these may concern us. Moore suggests we look at the classical Greek myths for a way out of depression over this and to delve into the depths for light. Odysseus came back to be a father and always intended to do so in spite of his wanderings. Persephone's mother was able to use the light motherhood gave her to look after another's child while her daughter was with Hades and to negotiate the return of her daughter and the light for spring and summer. Young people can rejoice in the positive side of "Puer" as he calls boyhood (no mention of girlhood), the desire for independence and exploration, even if it means lack of respect for the older generation. This encourages the questioning that is a vital part of care for the soul..Moore suggests Jesus as a fine example of Puer through his challenges to the teachings of the scribes and the Pharisees and his claim that all around him were his family, giving no priority to his mother, father, sisters and brothers.

Psychological problems can also be dealt with by digging deeper and looking for the light .It is not enough to despise egoism. The soul needs love. Narcissus, for example was unhappy in his egoism. But Moore notes the soul needs love and must be helped to see itself as part of everything, as Narcissus obtained peace and satisfaction by seeing himself in the water as part of something greater and deeper. Anger, jealousy and envy need to be examined to find why

we feel these emotions. Then we can see the light in the positive things we feel we lack and how this caused the pains. Other paths to the positive must be sought.

The section on depression suggests that it may be caused by something in the past that we either regret losing or regret having done. This can be seen as a Saturnine cold and dark that helps the soul focus on the search for the gold treasure and for initiation into a new rite of passage leading to substantive thoughts about the larger issues of life and carrying the soul to remote places of unique insights and enjoyment. Moore rather loses me when he says violence, thievery and guns are good as they help the soul break out of its boundaries and continue to explore in new directions that are creative and destructive of the darkness. Perhaps he means as symbolic of other things that break boundaries or conventions. Even violence and anger can be helpful.

The section I found most interesting was on "The Poetics of Illness". He still finds reference to classical gods useful but adds the images we can find in illness and pain. As an example he describes massage where sudden pain on an injured area brought two prancing, beautiful tigers to his mind. He has called these back to himself in moments of pain and brought beauty, energy and poetic imagery to him with courage, strength and self-possession, just by their presence. He carries this further to say poetics can be words, music, art, writing and many forms of creativity. He includes house-keeping as creativity, which is intriguing. Certainly there is a satisfaction in order and choices to be made that can be considered artistic. We can sympathise with the body's organs in their pain or disease. Disease means lack of ease and can be lessened by providing comfort through something that pleases the organ, such as the scent of flowers.

Sheila Andrew

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