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Upcoming Services

The theme for June is revelry. Check elsewhere in Touch Stone for more on this theme, which is shared by many congregations across Canada.

May 27 *The Fredericton Downtown Health Centre.* Our guest speaker will be Marchell Coulombe, who will give us an overview of the mandate, facilities, and services offered by agency of the Horizon Health Care system.

June 3 *What is this thing we call "revelry?"* People often begin an exploration using the "five Ws," that is, what, when, where, why, and who? A few months ago, Heather Lunergan talked about these questions. Now, she is going to look at a single word. Revelry. Where did it come from? Who used it first, and Why? When did the word's meaning change over the years, and What does it mean in the twenty-first century? Join in an exploration of revelry.

June 10 *Flower Communion.* Finally, summer seems on the way, so the time is right for a celebration of flowers, which have long been an international symbol of peace (think of Holland's annual gift of tulips thanking Canada for support during WW 2). Celebrating Flower Communion is an excellent opportunity for Unitarian Universalist congregations to express their

commitment to our Sixth Principle: We Covenant to Affirm and Promote the Goal of World Community with Peace, Liberty and Justice for All. Each person is invited to bring a flower to share during the service.

June 17 *Celebrating our U*U Connections.* As the only Unitarian Universalist community in New Brunswick, we may forget that we are part of a world-wide network of associations, congregations, and groups. Jo-Anne will share a few facts about the UU movement in Canada and abroad. This will be a short service, followed by the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton's Annual General Meeting. All are welcome to attend, although only members can vote at the AGM.

June 24 June is a transition time for us, the end of our Fellowship year and the beginning of our more casual summer Sundays together, the end of the terms of our current Board and committees on the last day of the month. This June, some will be joining the Fellowship, some will be bridging from youth to young adult, some will be graduating, some will be marking other milestones that have taken place in the last year we have spent together. Please let Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes know if you would like to have a special time dedicated to a transition or rite of passage in your life.

Our annual year-end picnic will be held on June 24, following the service. Everyone is invited to bring something to share, as we end our "church year." See elsewhere in Touch Stone for information about our informal "Summer Sunday" gatherings.



The Fredericton Unitarian Fellowship's AGM

The Fredericton Unitarian Fellowship AGM is planned for Sunday, June 17th at 11:45. Information will be emailed a week before the meeting.

According to TUFF by-laws:

35. The Annual General Meeting of members of the Fellowship shall be held in each year, during the month of June, at such time and place as shall be fixed by the Board of Directors.
45. (a) Notice of a general meeting of the members of the Fellowship shall be deemed to be sufficient if given by email to all “active” members, and posted, at least seven days prior to the time of the meeting.

Joan Brewer
Board secretary

Naomi Frooman



Naomi Frooman has turned 18 and recently signed our membership book as an adult. Looking on (L to R) are Dad Jeff Frooman, Mom Alyssa Sankey and chair of the membership committee Sheila Moore. (photo by Glenna Hanley)

Women’s Pot Luck

The next Unitarian Fellowship women’s pot luck will be held Friday, June 22. Sheila Moore and Pauline Fawson will host the gathering at 874 York St. We gather at 6 PM and eat at 6:30 PM. The topic for discussion will be circulated before the date. For further information, contact Joan Brewer at jebrewer@rogers.com

Second Thursday

June 14th, 7pm, Second Thursday.

The third Thursday of June is Solstice and Indigenous Day, and rather than preventing you from celebrating it we will meet the week before. Carlos and Jo-Anne will talk about the importance of Indigenous Day and highlight some of the work that the Canadian Unitarian Council has accomplished in its Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation journey.

Bridging Ceremony

In UU communities, most young people bridge out of their youth community and into the young adult community when they are between 18 and 20 years of age. This is celebrated with a ceremony in congregations and gatherings including the CUC Conference, and is a bittersweet occasion for those who have felt deeply loved and cared for at CanUudle and other youth cons. Ariel and Asha, CUC staff responsible for youth and young adult programs, have created strong YA connections across Canada and yearly gatherings called “Chorus” that share time and activities with CanUudle participants.

This year, Anneke and Orianna, who attended Chorus, are planning a youth- and young adult-led Worship and Bridging Ceremony. We invite others who are ready to bridge into the YA community to honour the occasion on a Sunday evening in June. The date will probably be June 17 or June 24, depending on work schedules, at 7:30 pm. All are welcome to attend. We will send you more details a few days before the ceremony, but please keep both dates free.

Summer Sundays

Summer Sundays in July and August at the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton Submitted by Heather Lunergan, Sunday Services Chair

Each year, at the end of June, our congregation finalizes our “business” with an Annual General Meeting (June 17). Then, on June 24th, we’ll have a year-end picnic to break from our formal “worship” cycle. Early in September, we gather for an incoming Sunday, where we share recollections of summer events and eat corn. In between, the months of July and August are our “Summer Sundays.”

This year, as last, we will close our fellowship to the public for two Sundays. On July 1, and September 2, we will have a “break” to allow our members and friends to enjoy the first and last “long weekends” of summer. Please note

those dates: Sunday, July 1, is Canada Day and Sunday, September 2, falls on Labour Day weekend. Do something fun, watch a parade, listen to music, have a barbecue with family and friends. Just don't come to 874 York expecting coffee.

But, beginning with Sunday, July 8 and concluding on Sunday, August 26, the Fellowship will be open for "Summer Sundays." These are informal gatherings designed to allow those who wish to join for fellowship and light refreshments. It also ensures that visitors find an open door and a welcome at our religious home.

Summer Sundays are hosted by volunteers. The duties are not onerous: open and close up the building, put on some coffee, provide a small treat like cookies or fruit, and be there to welcome those who come by. No service is required, rather, each host is welcome to what suits them. Some may plan a discussion about a topic of interest, while others may simply be on hand to welcome and chat with those who come by. Our literature supply and guestbook will be available.

Volunteers! This is your chance to volunteer. There will be a sign-up sheet in the kitchen, but also, Summer Sundays are coordinated by the Sunday Service committee. So, contact Heather Lunergan to sign up for your Summer Sunday.



Freedom in Exile

The Autobiography of the Dalai Lama

Imagine being taken from your home and family at the age of three as the reincarnation of your country's sacred and political leader, having to take over that role from the Regent when you are fifteen and coping with the invasion of a Chinese army that eventually forces you to leave your country!

This book shows how the current Dalai Lama coped with all these problems and maintained peace of mind and hopefulness for good in all people even though he has not been able to get back to Tibet since 1959. The freedom he refers to in the title is mental and comes with a rigorous programme of study and Buddhist practice. He feels free to continue to work for the good of Tibetans inside the country and outside and to improve international relations and understanding of his religion. He even visited St Thomas University here in Fredericton, though we do not get mentioned in the book

He did his best to negotiate peace with the Chinese and declares his sympathy with communism. Politically he considers himself half Marxist but says he would vote Green. He even had some admiration for the Chinese leadership but was sad for "the foolish old man who clung to his ideas despite all the evidence communism was broken down." The Dalai Lama was given the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989.

There was a fierce crackdown on Lhasa in 1989 and the Dalai Lama's peace efforts were rejected. Before he wrote this book in 1990. When I was there in 1992 Buddhism was still an obvious part of the beliefs and culture of many Tibetans. Some were still prostrating themselves on a pilgrimage to the shrines in the city and up in the hills we met a group of boys who shouted "Lama, Lama!" with great excitement and took us to a wonderful ceremony where a lama blessed food and shared it with us and the locals in an isolated shack. There were still active monasteries with young students. My daughter and I saw some debating at a monastery and were hoping for a photo without disturbing them, but when they saw us they enthusiastically welcomed us and wanted a photo with us! I hope this was more than just a reflection of the Dalai Lama's 1990 comment that serious study was no longer a part of Tibetan Buddhism and he feared it was being reduced to a tourist attraction! Postcards of the Dalai Lama bought in Nepal were cherished gifts.

The book is well written and has intriguing details on how he maintained friendships as a child, the attempts at negotiation, the perilous escape and how he has worked to support his ideals. If you want to hear him speak about this, go to *The Great Escape* on Netflix to see how he got out of Tibet and his comments on this and his life afterwards.

Sheila Andrew



Questions About Revelry

Revelry prepares you for surrender. Increases trust in life. Puts you in a state of openness. Reminds you that it's worth letting go, that there's something more out there beyond the stiffness of self protection. (Soul Matters participant)

– A busy executive was speaking to her six-year-old niece at the end of a particularly frustrating day. She had spent the better part of the day trying to get a new printer installed. Nothing had worked, and she was exhausted and very frustrated. On the phone with her young niece, she described in general terms how frustrated she was.

Her niece asked, "Did you try hard?"

"Yes," she replied.

"Did you try really, really hard?"

"Yes I did."

"Well then," said the six-year-old, "now it's time to go out and play!"

(Margaret Wheatley in *Perseverance*)

Some questions for personal reflection (or coffee chats)

Can you honestly say you have recently been guilty of

“revelry”? Think of the synonyms: boisterous, rejoicing, fun. If not, do you WANT to be able to be accused of it? What source of revelry is tempting you right now?

When was the last time you did something “useless”?

What ritual or tradition regularly calls you back to revelry? How are you passing that on to or sharing it with those you love?

When was the last time you experienced revelry in church?

Has revelry increased or decreased as you’ve aged? Grown deeper? Changed in form?

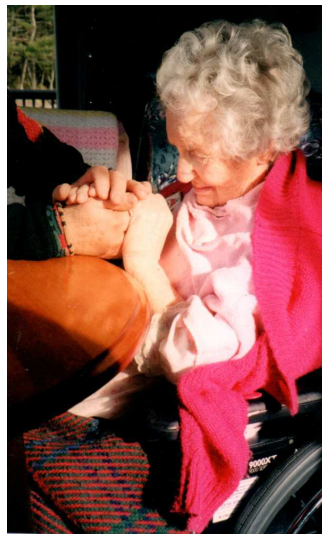


An Injustice to one, is an Injustice to all.

The palliative care and funeral processes for those leaving us are fraught with chances of saying or doing things hurtful to the memory of the deceased the family and close friends. The stories here are my personal experiences, from the very bad to the exceedingly good. How would you categorize them?

The Siblings and Their Sister.

My children’s mother died at 47 after a two-year battle with cancer, leaving three children ages 9-17. Her siblings came for one visit, a month before she passed. Well-intentioned but ill-prepared, they came in like a storm, offering unsolicited and conflicting advice, each one on top of the other. The housekeeper left in a huff, the crisis deepened, and I was left to find other health care arrangements.



The Woodsman. My neighbour, an existence farmer, logger and handyman all his life spent much of his 85th year in hospital as his health deteriorated. I saw him last when I brought him clean laundry and the newspaper. The nurse was adamant that I could not see him (Doctor’s orders.) Bliss heard me at the nurses’ station and strongly countermanded the nurse. We had a wonderful visit at his bedside. Later, the family asked me, a newcomer to the community, to be a pallbearer at his funeral, and told me that he had bequeathed me his prized .12-gauge shotgun.

Three Close Friends. Jane (UK) had been her husband’s caregiver for many years. Now in palliative care herself, her two best friends decided to look after her needs. Maria (Uganda) became the gatekeeper and Sharon (Canada) the family counsellor and eulogist at the cele-

bration of life ceremony. Jane expressed how much she enjoyed her time in palliative care, enjoying regular visits with all her friends, when she was able. “I wouldn’t have missed this part for anything,” she confided with a laugh.

Marie’s Life Force. She came to Canada, a penniless Irish farm girl in 1921. She quietly raised a family, fulfilling an immigrant’s dream to raise her children with more hope for opportunities than she had ever had. In her late 80’s she suffered two strokes that finally took her from us. With few friends living close by, she drew love and strength from those close at hand. Five days before she passed, she could no longer talk. She could only hold strongly onto her family members arms as if to draw in the warmth of life and love. Still dressed to the nines and hair coiffed, I still remember her tightly clasping my hands, as she seems to be saying, “I love you all.”

The Priest and The Professor. The respected professor had passed after a long illness. Over 300 colleagues, family and friends overflowed the university chapel. Many of them had hoped for a little time to talk about him; but, having foreseen the quandary, the priest had earlier arranged with the widow to limit these talks to eight people. To reduce chances of hurt feelings, he invited the rest of the mourners at the beginning of the service to rise and reminisce with their pew neighbours about their favourite stories of the deceased. For five minutes the sanctuary exploded with happy babble, followed by the designated speakers and the rest of the ceremony. The priest had worked his magic, and the people were satisfied.

My take-aways from these stories: one should not interfere or countermand immediate family arrangements; and, keeping close friends from the patient without his or her consent is unjustifiable. Recognize that most palliative care patients have a fierce desire to stay with the living.

Submitted by
John van Abbema



The Last Rites of Bokononism

From Kurt Vonnegut’s book *Cat’s Cradle*

Lucky us! As the inimitable writer and UU friend, Kurt Vonnegut, has written,

“God made mud. God got lonesome. So God said to some of the mud, “Sit up!” “See all I’ve made,” said God, “the hills, the sea, the sky, the stars.”

And I was some of the mud that got to sit up and look around. Lucky me, lucky mud.”

Indeed. And given this, how can we not revel in this precious, fragile, ridiculously lucky life of ours?! How can we be anything other than a people of revelry?!

Of course, that’s not to say life is easy or without pain. That’s a given. But if the spiritual life is about anything,

it's about the task of stepping back and seeing it all as a gift, even with the trials and terrors. And we are so good at looking squarely at those trials and terrors. Even taking responsibility for fixing them.

Our faith rightly reminds us we have a duty and responsibility to ease the burdens of others, to bend the arc toward justice. But it also reminds us that we have a duty to joy, even a duty to plain old "useless" fun! Which, of course, is not really useless. Joy, celebration, play and revelry are a means of replenishment. We will have nothing to give, if we don't make room for getting filled up.

Even more than that, revelry is also about perspective. This too is the message of our faith. This life of ours is ultimately the equivalent of being invited to the best party in town. Our challenge is to stay awake to that, to continually pull ourselves back from the mindset that our days are simply a series of challenges and responsibilities. It's all about balance. We are called to look around and see all that must be done. We are also called to look around and see all that has been given.

So, this month, let us make room for the gift. Let's let the dogged focus on responsibility go, at least for a little while. Let's lay it down, and as Vonnegut says, sit up and look around! And notice all there is to revel in!

Lucky mud. Lucky us!

Notes: The religion of Bokononism is imaginary, and exists only in Vonnegut's (satirical) novels. This essay first appeared in the newsletter of the UU Church of Halifax, which shares monthly themes with our and other congregations.

A Blessèd Litha to All



A minor Sabbat in the Wiccan calendar, Litha or Midsummer's Eve, is celebrated on the day of the Summer Solstice (**Note:** *the Celtic Pagan day begins at sunset, thus the tradition of celebrating the "eve" of the day*). At this time, our Lady and her consort are at the height of their powers and there is abundance. It is a time for love.

The 2018 CUC Conference & AGM

an inspiring event

By Glenna Hanley, *President*

As you may know I attended my first Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Hamilton, May 17 to 20. It was an uplifting experience.

The theme of the conference was love and justice, with lots of workshop sessions to chose from and most evolving around that theme. There were also lots of coffee breaks and meal breaks with time to meet other Unitarian Universalists from every corner of Canada. This is one of my favourite parts of such conferences and as important a function as the organized sessions in my opinion.

I sat with someone different at every meal, including a group of youth at Saturday's intergenerational lunch, so I could meet as many people as possible.

There were close to 300 people attending (final figures not yet available) including 40 young adults (18 to 35) and 60 youth (14 to 20). The crowd swelled for the unique and very special Sunday service with many local people from the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton in attendance.

The host of the weekend, the Hamilton church, along with the CUC staff, did a super job organizing the event. That included our own Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes who, as conference convener, was kept busy all weekend and I saw her only fleetingly, going from one task to the next.

The AGM was on Friday night, the sessions on Sat and Sunday, a pub event Friday night with local band, a thoroughly entertaining "UUs Got Talent" show Saturday night, and Sunday night a banquet with lots of awards and presentations. The Sunday morning choir was made up of UUs from many member congregations.

The conference was held at McMaster University and visitors housed in campus residences. Most events were held on campus and in just two buildings, so it was an easy walk from one event to the next.

There are a lot of things I could report on but I will try



Rev. Linda Thomson at the Sunday service during the CUC conference in Hamilton, Ont., with her grandson James, two and a half. In 2016 Rev. Thomson generously left her daughter and three day-old-grandson to spend a weekend with us at UFF. (Photo by Glenna Hanley)

and give you just a few of the highlights.

There are 45 UU congregations across Canada and a new one, Nelson Unitarian Spiritual Centre (BC) was affirmed at the AGM, to much applause. (I am jealous of their name). The total number of members across Canada has been in decline, from 5,000 a few years ago to a current 4,326, a 14 per cent decrease.

We are not the only congregation that has experienced a decrease in members. I discovered a lot of congregations, even some larger ones, are focused on growing their membership.

There are some success stories, like the Grand River Unitarian Congregation in Kitchener, Ont. which has grown to 162 members. I am hoping our Growth and Strategy committee can touch base with them and maybe get some ideas on how they did it. (However the Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo area has a population of over 500,000.)

A new board was elected and Jane Ebbert of Calgary replaces Keith Wilkinson of Vancouver as president. There is a vacancy for a board member from our eastern region and our regional representative Carol Cumming-Speirs (Montreal) may come calling on us and Halifax to find that missing board member.

Among a number of resolutions passed I think the one to increase the Annual Program Contribution (APC) from

100 to 101.60 per member is of most interest to us. These are the funds every congregation is asked to pay to the CUC each year and is a major component of their budget.

The new rate will apply to 2019. Based on 40 members, as is expected, it would cost us \$4,064. That amounts to a little more than 15 per cent of our estimated revenues for 2018 (of \$25,500). This is quite a large bill for this small congregation.

However the CUC is aware of that and the good news is a task force is working on a new formula. CUC board treasurer Tanya Cothran said the proposal is to use a mix of half of the APC as it is currently calculated plus a percentage of the donations income of each congregation. This would mean a much lower payment for us. But 13 congregations would pay considerably more. It will come up for a vote at the next AGM in 2019.

There will be an AGM in 2019 but the next combined conference/AGM will be in 2020 in Halifax. Hopefully more of our members will be able to participate.



Joys and Concerns

Congratulations to Sarah Richard who graduated from St Thomas University this month. Well done Sarah.

Much happiness to Sheila Thompson and Chuck Baird on their wedding in Florida this winter.

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