



874 York Street, Fredericton, N.B., E3B 3R8 (506) 451-0919

Sunday Service 10:30 a.m. Web Site: <http://www.uff.ca> Email: [office@uff.ca](mailto:office@uff.ca)Newsletter editor: [touchstone@uff.ca](mailto:touchstone@uff.ca)

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## Upcoming Services

The theme for our month of November is Rootedness.

### October 28 *Childrens International Summer Villages.*

Debbie McKinnon is a local board member of CISV, the organization that rented our building for the month of July. The Service Leader will be Heather Lunergan. Here is what Debbie says about CISV: founded over 60 years ago, CISV is a global movement dedicated to educating and inspiring action for peace. We believe that we can help change the world by providing life-changing experiences and building friendships that last a lifetime. We offer an exciting blend of educational programs and amazing volunteer opportunities for the young and the young at heart. Our fun, 'learning by doing' programs begin with our original Village, a four-week residential camp for 11-year-olds.

**November 4** James McCarthy will speak of his work with AIDS NB. Service Leader will be Heather Lunergan.

**November 11** This is Remembrance Day, and there is a service at the Fredericton Cenotaph. To allow those who wish to attend that service, we will not be having a regular service this day. Rather, the Fellowship will be open and welcome anyone who wishes to share coffee, tea and conversation. Please note that RE will not be available that day, but everyone or any age, is welcome.

**November 18** Joan McFarland will lead the service and her guest will be Kylie Bergfalk, with a talk entitled: "*Access without Fear: Can Fredericton become a Sanctuary City?*" The Access Without Fear campaign aims to have Fredericton become a community that guarantees access to services to all residents regardless of their citizenship/immigration status. No One is Illegal would like to discuss the meaning of Access Without Fear policies with the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton and explore ways in which the fellowship can support this campaign in the future as well as ways in which they may already be implementing access without fear in their own work.

**November 25** Heather will lead the service and our speaker is Stephen Ward. This is his second visit, and he will speak about populism. Stephen J. A. 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. Ward has extensive experience in media both academically and professionally.



## Tea, Laughter and Conversation (TLC)

**Wednesday, Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 pm at 874 York St.**

Our topic for conversation will cover a couple of current themes: The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of World War 1, and our November theme at the Fellowship – Rootedness.

While we have our tea and refreshments, and after laughing at silly jokes, our sharing conversation will be:

*Where was your family during World War 1 and stories related to that theme.*

Please join us for an afternoon of shared community.

**Questions?** Call Sheila Moore 450-9021.



## Rootedness

### Our Theme for November

“To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul. It is one of the hardest to define. A human being has roots by virtue of [their] real, active and natural participation in the life of a community which preserves in living shape certain particular treasures of the past and certain particular expectations for the future.” – Simone Weil

“I never saw a discontented tree. They grip the ground as though they liked it, and though fast rooted they travel about as far as we do.” – John Muir

Rootedness. Our November theme. The Unitarian Congregation of Fredericton is one of many UU churches and fellowships across Canada, throughout North America and around the world. Other groups use monthly themes: you didn't think our committee comes up with all of this by ourselves, did you? A few years ago, The Unitarian Church of Montreal, one of the oldest in Canada, used rootedness as their theme. These comments, quotations and questions come from them. The first message is from Rev. Diane Rollent, who, in 2014, became the 11th settled Minister, and first woman, to lead that that church. Here are her words from December 2016.

What does it mean to be rooted in your life? Each of us has a story to tell of our own roots, of what keeps us deeply connected to all that truly matters to us.

I think of those who have deep roots in this community and those who are just starting to form roots here. I think of the many refugees in this world, and what it has meant for them to be completely uprooted from their lives, their homes and their families. I think of the Indigenous Peoples of this land and the way in which they were uprooted from their territories long ago.

When you've lost your homeland, when your past has been interrupted, the emotional and spiritual connection to your roots can be what keeps you alive. The importance of family, the love that is shared, the traditions that are observed and remembered can be the most precious things you have. These may be the only things that give you the courage to keep moving forward.

“Roots hold me close, wings set me free,” are words from the oft sung hymn, “Spirit of Life.” Sometimes we joke that this is a song of too many mixed metaphors, but I really love it. It reminds me that this faith calls me to stay grounded and rational, while still reaching for the mystery of the stars.

Here are some questions for discussion among yourselves, at the meal table, over coffee, or just to ponder while doing mundane chores.

1. What roots you the most? People? Places? Stories? Ideas? Hopes? Values?
2. Do you feel more or less rooted the older you get?
3. Are you still seeking home or have you found it? Have you reclaimed your roots? What did this mean to you?
4. Are there ways in which you are overly rooted? Stuck in commitments you would like to let go of? Overly attached? Do you need to find roots that feed you and free you rather than ones that bind you and leave you feeling tangled up?



## Board Update

The Board meets every month, generally on the first Sunday of the month, and our meetings are open to all members of the Fellowship. I welcome any comments, questions, and suggestions you might have about the decisions and plans we make on behalf of all members, and for the benefit of our congregation and the wider community. The next meeting will be on November 4, 2018, at 11:45.

Our meeting on October 14 (second Sunday, due to Thanksgiving the week before) was a combination of “management” (monitoring practical details) and “leadership” (big-picture planning) decisions. Among the former: we have now finalized the list of who performs which tasks, and shared two related documents. For instance, you may want to know that the committee chairs and board members will have updated key code numbers, that if you receive mail or a message at the Fellowship I will make sure you get it, and that Ken will continue to book the Fellowship building for members' and other activities.

Our Fellowship stewardship campaign will be carried out in November; please speak to me if you would like to join the committee to oversee it (documents and approaches will be chosen by the committee, but we have templates and suggestions as a starting point). During our Canvass, committee chairs and individuals will be speaking during Sunday services about the importance of the Fellowship to their lives. We also hope to have a meeting of committee chairs to talk about their needs and plans for 2019 (our fiscal year runs from January 1 to December 31).

As for the leadership actions, the Board approved a motion to support and contribute to a new committee formed to participate to an extremely important outreach project, the Community Action Group on Homelessness. This decision affirms our commitment to social responsibility and our desire to improve our local community. Watch for more information about our role in this initiative from

Myron.

Although we did not feel we had a significant and well-planned project to submit to the West Bequest Fund this year, we are already thinking about next year and are putting a plan in place to develop it during spring 2019, well before the September 30 deadline. The West Bequest Trust is an endowment fund established to affirm and promote the seven UU principles. Funds can be allocated to projects such as publishing books, writing and printing pamphlets, or offering programs to attract new members, contributing to the costs of a lay or professional minister or director of religious education, assisting small congregations or founding new ones, or other activities which meet the above objectives and are deemed to have the most chance of success by the committee. In the past we have received funds for pamphlets, ministers' visits, and the sign on our front yard. Glenna and Janet, our representatives on the committee, will send out information on how to submit suggestions, one of which may be chosen by the Board.

We have been asked by the Canadian Unitarian Council to choose our delegates for its Annual General Meeting. The AGM will be held in Toronto on the afternoon of Saturday, May 11 (2:00 to 5:30 pm Atlantic time); as there is no national conference this year, we will gather at the Fellowship and participate online. The CUC recommends selecting our congregation's two delegates early. In accordance with the Active Democracy Study Group resolutions approved in 2013, congregational delegates will be asked to serve one- to two- year terms, and there would be the expectation of ongoing communication between the delegates and the CUC Board and staff during those years, and that there be suggested roles for the delegates to play in their congregations during those years. Information about selection and delegates is here:

<https://cuc.ca/about-cuc/annual-general-meeting/delegate-information/>

Myron and I will be available on May 11 to help with logistical and governance matters, and I plan to hold a discussion in February on matters going to the AGM. I invite all of you to look at the information and see if you would like to serve us this way. We are looking for people committed to our congregation and to the CUC, who have or will acquire a good knowledge of the issues which will be discussed. New members and those who have not attended a CUC AGM before are encouraged to submit their applications to the Board, explaining why they would like to be a delegate.

The next CUC National Conference will be held on the long weekend in May 2019, in Halifax NS. Many of us will be volunteering, and we will arrange car pooling to ensure this Conference is accessible to as many of us as possible.

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes  
2018-2019 President of the UFF Board



## Women's Pot Luck

The next Unitarian Fellowship women's pot luck will be held Friday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>. Glenna Hanley will host the gathering at her home, 721 Palmer St. We gather at 6 PM and eat at 6:30 PM. The topic for discussion is: Perfectionism - does this describe you, or are you an easy-going type? If we learn from our mistakes, why are we always so afraid to make a mistake? For further information, contact Joan Brewer at [jebrewer@rogers.com](mailto:jebrewer@rogers.com)



## Populism

*On Sunday, November 25, the Fellowship will welcome back Stephen J. A. Ward, who an expert in ethical journalism. His latest book, Ethical Journalism in a Populist Age, has just been published. He has given permission for this excerpt, from the Introduction, to be published here. It should whet appetites for his talk on Populism later in the month.*

*Heather Lunergan*

### Chapter 1

#### *Polluted Spheres, Eroding Democracies*

What is the city but the people? –William Shakespeare, Coriolanus

### Section 1: A Polluted Public Sphere

#### *Democracy Eroding*

This book explains how journalists can protect and advance egalitarian, dialogic democracy, locally and globally. Rescuing democracy will require that journalists re-conceive their role in society. It will require the articulation of new ethical norms and practices. It will require concrete action. Journalists, in collaboration with other democratic agencies, need to join common cause to detox a polluted public sphere.

This book is a work in journalism ethics, defined as the norms that should guide the social practice of journalism. It presumes that democracy is in serious trouble, and journalists can—and must—do something about it. It also presumes that, of all the problems that beset journalism, its troubled relationship to democracy is crucial. Journalism should be a democratic craft, antagonistic to undemocratic forces of any type. While journalism can (and does) exist without democracy, no form of democracy worth having can exist without a journalism dedicated to democratic principles.

Democracy is a problem for several reasons. The practice of democracy, as a working system of government that seeks to be plural and egalitarian, is in deep trouble. The

pillars of egalitarian democracy are shaken every day by intolerant voices advancing racism, xenophobia, or representing some form of economic or class privilege. The ideal of democracy—a place where citizens deliberate impartially and factually on the common good—fails to guide politics. In the United States and many other countries, we witness the erosion of democratic communities bound by norms of tolerance, compromise, dialogue, and objective facts. Citizens who disagree with extreme populists or intolerant majorities are dismissed as unpatriotic citizens.

Three large factors have created, in large part, this current turmoil: (1) the rise a global public sphere; (2) the rise of extremism populism, and its infiltration of mainstream politics; and (3) the rise of information technologies that can be used to spread misinformation, division, and hatred. Despite the creative media unleashed by the digital revolution, the public sphere is corrupted in its capacity to discern truth from falsity, sincere reporters from manipulative voices, experts from ideologues, facts from uninformed assertion. The channels of information that inform democratic citizens—the very lifeblood of democracy—are polluted by false information, conspiracy theories, ideological extremism and manipulative groups. Not all of the public sphere is polluted. But so much of it is corrupted that new and strenuous efforts are needed to detox the sphere...

I approach the topic by dividing the book into two parts. The first part explains my conception of the problems facing journalism. In Chapter 2, I provide a history of populism and how journalism's history is intertwined with it. The history helps us, in Chapter 3, to define populism and extreme populism, and enumerate their strategies. The second part examines what journalists should do to counter extreme populism and misinformation in the global public sphere. Chapter 4 redefines journalism as democratically engaged journalism and provides journalists with a litmus test for dangerous demagogues. Chapter 5 and 6 provide practical guidelines for covering extreme populists and such issues as hate speech, extreme patriotism, fake news, and the role of journalism objectivity.



## Holiday Wreaths

Linda Sprague will be selling wreaths again this holiday season for The Stephen Lewis Foundation, (Grandmothers Helping Grandmothers) in support of grandmothers in Africa who are raising grandchildren whose parents have died due to AIDS. Our Fredericton branch has raised nearly \$200,000 over the past 10 years with our various fundraising projects.

The 12 inch wreaths are \$12 each, undecorated, nice and thick and double-sided. Please place your orders before November 25 with Linda at [spraguella39@gmail.com](mailto:spraguella39@gmail.com).

The wreaths will be delivered November 30 to Linda's house, 29 Fleet Court in Garden Place off the Woodstock Road. They may be picked up there or Linda will bring them to the service at the Fellowship Sunday December 2, or she can deliver them to you. Cheques (made out to "Grandmothers Helping Grandmothers") or cash can be paid upon delivery.



## Jesus' Abba

### The God Who Has Not Failed Us

by John Cobb

Cobb claims that the Bible is true but many efforts to understand the idea of God have failed. God should be seen as Abba. The Hebrew word for Daddy. Mama and Parent lack the significance of Daddy at this time.

The idea of God was confused by the many nations adopting Christianity. Rulers liked the idea of a God who exercised power through Divine Right and passed this on to them. However the United States changed this with an atheist government and technology and science have led us to look for the mechanisms of life. God created this and the laws that we seek. Darwin led to many abandoning the idea of Abba.

But Cobb says no, his personal experience led him to find joy and communion with Abba in seeing God's grace in an individual like Jesus or in a community as a divine companion or sensitivity to the feelings of others. Divinity School led him to find purpose, love and meaning in the world again. He found that in all things God works for good, including the call that came to him in a part of his career when things looked unfortunate.

Healing came to him by union with Abba who helps us achieve what we can for ourselves and a wider good where possible, even by the power of prayer from a distance. Our minds can only see truth and reality as far as the mind can understand it and this includes seeing how Abba's good is present in all things. It is not a question of "Deus Ex Machina". God is present in all things. So we must seek in relating to Abba a deeper acceptance and awareness of ourselves.

So how did the idea of Abba get lost? Cobb claims that in the Middle Ages universities and churches discouraged probing and creative thought. The idea of God the judge took over and only St Francis was able to see beyond this at the time.

Cobb analyses the relationship between other doctrines and his views. First we must accept the idea of free will. Science, he says, does not deny this. Subjects can make a difference and God is one of those making this difference. Events are receptive of the past and exercise agency in relationship to the future. They are data for other events

and in that sense objects.

Darwin's views do not deny this. He allows for change for the better morally and freedom of action. Science does not exclude subjective activities such as our decisions. The idea of Abba does not exclude other religions. Mutual respect is essential for inter-faith dialogue. There may be some problems accepting Abba for Hindus who do not seek heaven after death or advancing God's kingdom on earth he says. As I recall the advice of a god comes in a Hindu classic from a chariot driver, so Abba seems not impossible there. However polytheism complicates things. He sees no problem in Judaism, or Islam where the Sufi God is much like Jesus to him. Buddhism may also include some problems since he says Gautama saw attachment to God as an obstacle to enlightenment. But he also said there was no reality to relate to, only compassion and acceptance of the ephemeral. To Cobb, compassion is non-attachment and willingness to let go, which is trust in God. Indigenous wisdom has respect for other creations and the environment, with awareness of spirits. Cobb says Jesus also affirmed the subjectivity of other physical living things and also subjects or spirits that are not tied so closely to particular physical things.

The current world crisis needs Abba, Cobb says. History is being used to excuse nationalism and violence and even the use of this in Christianity in the last half millennium. We must look for the positive in history. Abba will educate us and show choices. History is not determined by God to provide temporary superiority for the white race. Abba wants community, free expression and opportunities for all, encouraging and supporting the positive use of life. Consider The Lord's Prayer as an example: thy Kingdom come, Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.. So we must give what we can, pay what we can, work for a debt free society and a community of communities of communities. The decision to serve Abba is the choice of life for all. Jesus and Paul were not supporters of family values, so we must go beyond that.

Cobb has more details on many of these points It seems to me a Unitarian could sum it up in our hymn: "Spirit of Life, come unto me...".

The van Abbemas have a copy of this book, so you could ask them for a loan and some more opinions..

Sheila Andrew



## Ten Thousand Villages Festival Sale

**Friday, November 9 from 10:00 AM to 7:00 PM and Saturday, November 10 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM**

Sponsored by Fredericton Mennonites, a two-day sale of modern and traditional international crafts to benefit artisans in more than 30 countries.

Will take place at the Wilmot United Church at 473 King St., Fredericton, NB.

For two days the Fredericton Mennonites offer the Fredericton community an opportunity to make a difference by shopping fair trade. Shoppers will discover hundreds of handcrafted home décor items, musical instruments, ornaments, toys and jewellery made by skilled artisans in more than 30 Developing countries.

The hand made products featured in this sale are offered through Ten Thousand Villages. Ten Thousand Villages creates opportunities for artisans in developing countries to earn an income by bringing their products and stories to our markets through long-term trading relationships. All proceeds from the Fredericton Festival Sale benefit Ten Thousand Villages artisan partners.

There were 75 Festival Sales held this past year in communities from Newfoundland to Vancouver Island, Ten Thousand Villages also operates 26 stores across Canada. Ten Thousand Villages is a non-profit, fair trade organization and a program of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). MCC is the relief, service and peace agency of the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches.

Ten Thousand Villages – Petitcodiac Mennonite Church  
55 Main Street, Petitcodiac, NB E4Z 4L9  
(506) 756-2021  
[Atlantic@villages.ca](mailto:Atlantic@villages.ca)

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Please send articles to [touchstone@uff.ca](mailto:touchstone@uff.ca)