



The Newsletter of the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton

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## Upcoming Services

*You are the fairy tale told by your ancestors.* —Toba Beta (CLF)

The Theme for December at the the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton is Memory (Ancestors/Blessing). This follows on our November theme of Rootedness, since our roots not only belong to each of us, but connect us to our personal and shared ancestors through memories. Our Fellowship has many connections, both as a congregation and through individual members and friends.

One of these connections is with the Church of the Larger Fellowship, a community of people who, for a variety of reasons, [mmcfarlan@stu.caeet](mailto:mmcfarlan@stu.caeet) with others beyond their own towns or cities. The CLF is well-established, and has full-time professional staff, as well as a multitude of lay leaders. Each week, CLF presents a Sunday evening worship that anyone can attend, simply by signing up and following along by computer. This allows people who have no access to a "church" or "fellowship" to join in community. CLF also works closely with people who are incarcerated or otherwise "cut off" from their regular community.

Each month, the CLF adopts a theme, as do many congregations across Canada and the US. These groups are generous with their material, asking only that the source be acknowledged. This month, some of the material in Touch Stone comes from the Church of the Larger Fellowship, based on their November theme of Ancestors. We

thank the CLF for permission to share these items with our local U\*U community and our many friends.

**December 2** Deborah van den Hoonaard is the author of *The Widowed Self: The Older Woman's Journey through Widowhood* published in 2001. She has recently conducted a new study with a new cohort of widows to see how things have changed and how they have remained the same. She will be sharing what she found in her talk at the service. Joan McFarland will be the service leader. Title of the talk: "You are just you. You present yourself to the world: Experiencing widowhood in today's society."

**December 9** Multigenerational Multifaith Service: Spiritual Heritage. In many religions, this is a season of special significance. Through readings, songs, and symbols from different faith communities, we will be exploring some of the stories of creation and birth that have been passed down through the ages as a sacred heritage. This is a service for participants of all ages.

**December 16** Today is our Christmas music sing-a-long. Join Heather Lunergan and our pianist Margaret Fitzgerald as we sing traditional carols as well as popular songs of your choosing. This Sunday is also the end of our Stewardship Campaign, and we will share community and lunch after our service. The hospitality committee is looking after that, so you do not have to bring potluck (well, unless you have extra holiday baking to share).

**December 23** Please join us for informal coffee and conversation at the Unitarian Fellowship. This will be a chance to share stories and memories of the holiday season. Please bring holiday guests with you if you wish. Hosts will be announced shortly.

**December 30** Fire Communion/Burning Bowl. On or near the first Sunday in January, many Unitarian Universalist congregations hold a ritual to bid farewell to the old year, and to release it. Carlos and Jo-Anne Elder Gomes will lead a fire communion. Everyone is welcome.

**THIRD THURSDAY, December 20, 7pm** Blue Christmas. This annual service is for those who want

to share a time of sacred reflection in the midst of the social and commercial pressures of the season. We acknowledge that not everyone has joyful memories from childhood, and that others are mourning the loss of loved ones or of parts of their lives which they value. Together, we will share readings, personal reflections, and music, and light candles of healing. We will hold space to touch and honour feelings of pain and overwhelm, and will offer hope, warmth, and light.



## Spiritual Ancestors

A Reflection by Kat Liu

By permission from the Church of the Larger Fellowship.

Like many Unitarian Universalists of colour (and many white allies), I get tired of white male dominance within our society and yearn for more diverse representation. Yet I was taken aback one day, while admiring stained glass renderings of some of our spiritual forefathers, when a friend came up next to me and dismissed the images as “old, dead white men.” This was a phrase that I had used numerous times myself in response to images of men who meant nothing to me. But in the narthex of that historic Unitarian church, I recognized some of the men and their importance to our faith.

“Old, dead white men” suggests that these people have no relevance to us now, especially to those of us who are neither white nor male. But these people have relevance to me. They were integral to shaping Unitarian Universalism into what it is. And since UUism is part of who I am, these people were integral to shaping me. They are my spiritual ancestors.

Whenever I lead a communal construction of an ancestral altar, I assure participants that ancestors need not be only those people to whom we’re biologically related. Ancestors can be anyone whose past life now shapes our current one.

We are more than just our bodies. Buddhism describes every being as comprised of five “aggregates,” only one of which is physical form; the rest have to do with how we perceive and think. In other words, those beings who shape how we perceive and think are every bit as much responsible for who we are as those who contributed our genetic makeup.

Still, it’s easier to recognize biological ancestors. It’s easier to see how their genes, passed on through generations, created us. If any one of them did not exist then we would not exist. If any one of them way back in time were different, somebody might still exist in our place who could be similar, but they wouldn’t be us. We know that all our biological ancestors created us, even if they are now

so far removed that we might not recognize them.

The ideas that shape who we are come from our spiritual ancestors in the same way that our genes come from our biological ones. One “old, dead white man” whose ideas clearly shaped my life is Ralph Waldo Emerson. Emerson described Hindu theology using Christian terminology. His essay “The Over-Soul” is a direct translation of Hinduism’s Paramatman, param(a) meaning highest and atman meaning self or soul.

Emerson transformed Unitarianism from anti-trinitarian Christianity into a faith tradition that welcomes Hindus and Buddhists, Pagans and atheists and every other theological bent. Because if God or the Over-Soul is not separate from us individual souls, then it is no longer necessary to “believe in” God. Rather, what we agree on is the inherently worthwhile nature of humanity. Without Emerson, I would not be a UU. Many of us would not. His short-comings notwithstanding (and let’s face it, many of our ancestors had short-comings), Emerson is one of my spiritual ancestors.

Emerson was not among the men immortalized in stained glass that day, but William Ellery Channing was. Channing helped create Unitarianism in the United States by breaking off from the more traditional Congregationalists. He both rejected the trinity and asserted that we humans are capable of cultivating goodness, ever increasing our “likeness to God.”

While the Transcendentalists eventually decided that liberal Unitarian Christianity did not go far enough, it was people like Channing who created the spiritual space in which they could arise. Without Channing and his contemporaries, there would be no Emerson and his compatriots. If Emerson is like a spiritual grandparent, Channing is like a spiritual great-grandparent.

To respect our spiritual ancestors is to know that we don’t just come from a lineage of blood, but also of ideas. It is to realize that we are continually re-created and helping to re-create anew as we influence each other. It is to honour those we admire and to feel our connection even to those we don’t. To recognize our spiritual ancestors is to recognize the interdependent web.

Kat Liu runs the website [wizUU.net](http://wizUU.net), which exists to promote Unitarian Universalist values and identity by facilitating the sharing of UU resources and ideas. She is an active member of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco, California, and a member of the editorial board of the CLF’s *Quest Monthly*.



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## TLC (Tea, laughter & conversation)

Wednesday, Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 at the Fellowship

Join us for some seasonal jokes, a cuppa and a sharing conversation: “Happy Holidays or Merry Christmas?” Can you have Christmas without Jesus? Where will this topic take us?



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## Women’s Pot Luck

We do not meet during the month of December, so the next Unitarian Fellowship women’s pot luck will be held Friday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Linda Sprague and Sandra Shield will host the gathering at the Fellowship, 874 York St. We gather at 6 PM and eat at 6:30 PM. The topic for discussion will be circulated closer to the January date. For further information, contact Joan Brewer at [jebrewer@rogers.com](mailto:jebrewer@rogers.com)



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## Multifaith Program for All Ages

The Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton is a spiritual home for people of all ages. Children, youth, young adults, and older adults share more than a building; across the lifespan, we share our stories of our quests and milestones, curiosity and a sense of wonder, a religious tradition that draws from many sources, and a commitment to living out our principles in the congregation and in the wider community. We also share the monthly theme. We want you to know what we do on Sunday mornings, and especially to read about the multifaith program we are planning for the next month.

We strive to offer children and youth of all ages, as well as parents, volunteers, and visitors, a meaningful, supportive, and encouraging faith exploration program starting at 10:30 every Sunday morning. Approximately once a month, we have a multigenerational service, during which people of all ages take part in a special program designed to engage them in different conversations or activities. There is always at least one activity planned for pre-school-aged children and up, and parents are welcome to accompany their babies and toddlers while we do it. Many activities offer an opportunity for adults to engage with children and youth in conversations about the theme.

On Sundays on which we do not have a multigenerational service, children may stay with their parents or friends at the beginning of the service and come upstairs when they are ready. Younger children may come upstairs directly,

before the service, with a parent or RE volunteer. Each Sunday we do an opening worship circle, with a chalice lighting, a check-in, and a song. Then we usually do a story and a craft, game, or activity. At 11:30, we do a closing song, extinguish the chalice, and tidy up. Children are always welcome to play freely or to pass on any of the questions or activities and are encouraged to speak up about their needs and interests.

Our program in the coming weeks includes both multigenerational services and activities especially for children. We are exploring the theme of ancestors from a multifaith perspective, by talking about our family members and their cultural and religious backgrounds, as well as cultural and religious origins of others in our community.

November 25: Program for children and youth upstairs: Family trees (to bridge the November theme of Rootedness to the December theme of Ancestors). Please bring copies of photos of parents, relatives, ancestors etc. to place on the tree. You may want to put a first name and relationship on the back. We encourage you to tell a story from your own family history this week or next.

December 2: Program for children, youth, and perhaps some young adults who wish to join us: Multifaith Art Workshop. (Please come directly upstairs when you arrive.) Would you like to learn a bit about some Holy Days and holidays celebrated during the winter? Do you want to share your family or cultural traditions? We are inviting all interested (friends welcome!) to a Multifaith Art Workshop on Sunday morning. We will be telling stories from different religions and creating tree ornaments and images. The artwork will be displayed at the December 9 service.

December 9: Multigenerational Multifaith Service: Spiritual Heritage. This is a service for participants of all ages. In many religions, this is a season of special significance. Through readings, songs, and symbols from different faith communities, we will be exploring some of the stories of creation and birth that have been passed down through the ages as a sacred heritage. Children and youth will place symbols from different religions on the holiday tree.

December 16: During the annual singalong service, children and youth are invited to stay and sing carols and songs in the sanctuary. Younger children may come upstairs with a children’s program volunteer for active or quiet play. Following the service, all families are invited to our pre-holiday lunch.

December 23: This is an informal service. There will be no program for children, but they may go upstairs with a parent for active or quiet play.

December 30: Fire Communion. There will be no program upstairs for children. If they would like to stay for the service, we ask that a parent or youth/adult friend accompany them for safety reasons.

January 6: Program for children and youth upstairs: Mystery. We begin our theme of Mystery by sharing some stories of creation, evolution, and the wonder of the universe.

For more information about the program, please contact Elisabeth and Anneke at [eldergomes@yahoo.com](mailto:eldergomes@yahoo.com)



## Membership Committee News

Our committee hosted a “new attendee” supper at the Fellowship on Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>. We had some great conversation around the table, sharing a few UU jokes, getting to know each other and enjoying hot chowder on a cold evening.

Four people have signed our Membership Book: Jenn Carpenter-Gleim, Tracy Gleim, Decima Mitchell and Sandra Bender.

Extend a big welcome when you see them!



## Board Update

Your Board of Directors met on Sunday, November 4. Our next meeting will be on December 2. Board meetings are held once a month, beginning shortly after the Sunday Service, and 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.

At our last meeting, we established a Stewardship Committee to undertake what we have previously called our pledge campaign or canvass. Each year, we collect donations and forms for pledges/planned donations in order as an important step in preparing our budget for the next calendar year. The stewardship campaign will continue until December 16, when we will be enjoying a celebratory pre-holiday lunch following the annual singalong service. Sheila Moore, Heather Lunergan, and I met to take part in a webinar offered by the CUC and facilitated by Elizabeth Ann Terry, UUA Congregational Giving Specialist, and to discuss our plans. We also took part in the meeting for Board and Committee members, which we began by sharing the first experience we could remember of coming to the Fellowship. What attracted us the first time and what came to be meaningful to us are the foundation of our sense of belonging and gratitude. During the Stewardship campaign, the Sunday Service Committee has invited some of our members to share their reasons for being members of this community each Sunday, and I invite you to think about yours.

The webinar the committee watched encouraged us to

think differently about donations and the budgeting exercise, to shift from a “scarcity” mindset to an “abundance” or a “generosity” mindset. Celebrating the generosity of others and aspiring to be as generous as we can with our time, treasures, and talents are optimistic attitudes, rooted in a belief in goodness and benevolence, while a scarcity mentality is rooted in fear. I have realized that my inability to get rid of clothes, books, and objects stems from a fear that I will not have enough. I know a lot of people who experienced or were raised by people who went through the Depression or a period of paralyzing poverty share this anxiety. While frugality, avoiding consumerism and waste, and being careful of the resources we have are excellent practices, they can also lead to selfishness and bad decisions, and the accumulation of what we want to avoid: unused and unappreciated “stuff” that we don’t need and that clutter our minds and homes. The same is true of our sense of time: setting boundaries around the way we use our time in order to avoid wasting it can be a good thing, but it can make us feel preoccupied by our busy-ness, frustrated by matters that seem urgent but that we know are unimportant, guilty about our lack of productivity, or paralyzed into procrastination. All of these responses are based in the fear of not having enough time to do what we need to do. On the other hand, investing out time in silent, solitary contemplation, pursuits that bring us joy, cherished conversations with people we care about, and efforts that bring change to the lives of others are rooted in hope and blossom into compassion. So, this year, the Stewardship Committee and the Board of Directors invite you to dream about what the UFF can become, and what you can contribute of your valued time, treasures, and talents. We celebrate your generosity, and all you do to make our collective dreams become a reality in 2019.

One of our major investments of individual and shared resources in 2019 is our part in Fredericton’s Community Action Group on Homelessness. Many of you heard Faith McFarland speak about this project on September 30 or perhaps in recent media coverage of Fredericton’s tent city. A small group of volunteers from our congregation has formed a “pod” to assist an individual or a series of individuals from the community for a year. We know this project will require considerable time and resources, and the Board has endorsed the project and approved a significant financial contribution. Participating as a CAGH “Pod” is an act of great generosity on the part of the people most actively involved and of the congregation as a whole. We are reaching out to people who are among the most vulnerable members of our local community. Together we will learn and grow together, and act on principles we affirm and promote as Unitarian\*Universalist: “Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations” and “The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.”

At each Board meeting, we learn a little bit about the plans

of our committees, which are all functioning smoothly thanks to the dedication of the Committee Chairs and members. We heard about some of their ideas for the 2019 year at the Board and Committee meeting a couple of weeks later. Just as we find that Joys and Sorrows are one of the most meaningful rituals in which we engage, the Board does a Chalice Lighting and Check-in at every meeting.

The Board agreed to formulate policies on safety (protection of children and emergency measures) and other matters concerning the use of our building and grounds. We also attended to a number of business items, including our Annual Program Contribution to the Canadian Unitarian Council, a fee which is currently based on the number of members we have but may be based on our budget in the future.

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes,  
[President@UFF.ca](mailto:President@UFF.ca)



## Spiritual Reflection

### The Wishing Bones

A thousand grandmothers ago  
Pyrrha and Deucalion repopulated  
the world with rocks, bones of mother Earth,  
a generation of my ancestors strained  
from the mud of a drowned planet.

But I'm more interested in my earliest  
grandmothers, their gills and wetness,  
before they crawled from that blue expanse  
and learned to carry the sea within them,  
in their cells, between their cells, in their eyes.

The buoyancy of ocean has never left us.  
It hides in skin's complex reservoir  
where we're selectively permeable  
and our bodies exchange the smallest life.

If we had no need to distinguish ourselves  
from others we'd be missing the skin  
that defines lovers and enemies  
and opens itself to both.

– Jalina Mhyana, Spikeseed

“To acknowledge our ancestors means we are aware that we did not make ourselves...We remember them because it is an easy thing to forget: that we are not the first to suffer, rebel, fight, love, and die.”

– Alice Walker

“Breathing in, I see all my ancestors in me: my mineral ancestors, plant ancestors, mammal ancestors, and human ancestors. My ancestors are always present, alive in every cell of my body, and I play a part in their immortality.”

– Thich Nhat Hanh, The Art of Living

## Question for Spiritual Reflection:

“As you consider your ancestors, what gifts and burdens have they given you? How have their lives impacted your own?”

These readings and the question were shared in the CLF Faith Rocket, November 2018. The monthly Faith Rocket package, which I receive by subscription, includes two Small Group Ministry session plans as well as a complete program. If anyone is interested in using or reading the small group ministry plans, let me know and I can send it electronically.

Jo-Anne E-G



## Notes from the CUC Liaison

By Glenna Hanley

Dear Members and Friends,

Our board has given me a new title of CUC (Canadian Unitarian Council) Liaison. This is an old role that has recently been revived. My job is to be a link between our national organization and this congregation.

I am going to start by publishing some interesting bits of news in Touchstone. The job may also require me to contact our board and/or members more directly. Let's just see how this goes.

### Atheist minister gets her job back.

If you don't know, the CUC operates a separate e-mail list for board presidents, ministers, various leaders and CUC staff. A lot of interesting discussion goes on there. The most recent is the news about Rev. Greta Vosper.

Vosper is a United Church minister in a Toronto church who recently came out and proclaimed she is an atheist. The United Church of Canada wanted to remove her from her position. But negotiations have ended with the United Church hierarchy now allowing her to keep her job.

The discussion on the UU leaders list is mixed, some applauding the decision, others not so sure. But one thing the CUC took issue with was a Globe and Mail opinion piece questioning why Vosper would not just join the Unitarians. The CUC challenged the writer, Rosie DiManno, for describing us as “post-theist”. (I had to look that up but one definition suggests it means that humans have developed to a stage where they no longer need God.)

Rather than me trying to paraphrase the CUC letter to the Globe, written by our good friend Rev. Linda Thomson, I have copied excerpts below. You might want to keep this handy for when anyone challenges you about who we are.

*“To call us post-theistic is to focus on the beliefs of some of us, at the expense of those of others of us. It is true that belief or non-belief in God is a non-issue in our congrega-*

tions. But it is not true that we agree that the God question is no longer relevant because we've all agreed the very idea of God is no longer of any relevance to humans. Far from it, our members have a variety of understandings of God, and it is a non-issue for us because we strongly assert each individual's right to believe or not believe - as they see fit.

DiManno would have been more accurate if she'd described Unitarianism as a pluralistic tradition. Our work is to build supportive pluralistic communities of theists, atheists and agnostics, and more, where we learn from one another and celebrate our diverse understandings. We believe it helps us to be better people, better neighbours, and better citizens."

### UUs and Cannabis Legalization

As with so many other issues Unitarian Universalists were at the head of the pack in advocating for de-criminalization of cannabis. The most recent CUC e-newsletter says it dates back to 1968, some 50 years before the federal government got around to legalizing it this October. And in 2003 the CUC had an Alternative Drug Prohibition monitoring group that was studying de-criminalization and harm reduction.

### AGM in May, 2019

It is not too early to begin thinking about next year's CUC Annual General Meeting. This is the alternate year when there is no conference, just the AGM.

It is being hosted by the Unitarian Congregation of Mississauga on May 11 and you could be a delegate. Deadline to register is April 1. Contact our board president Jo-Anne Elder Gomes ([eldergomes@yahoo.com](mailto:eldergomes@yahoo.com)) if you are interested.

If you want to subscribe directly to the CUC e-newsletter contact Margo Ellis, communications director at CUC, at [margo@cuc.ca](mailto:margo@cuc.ca)

That's it for now.



## Our Covenant of Right Relationships With Each Other

It is time to renew our **Covenant of Right Relationships with each other** – The reaffirmation will be on the agenda for the January congregational budget meeting. Below is the history of our Covenant of Right Relationships with each other.

About 5 years ago, Sheila Moore and I attended a workshop at the Eastern Regional Fall gathering held here at the Fredericton Fellowship. There were three different workshops offered and by default we both ended up in the workshop about covenants of right relations. We admitted that we sort of chose it as a default topic, but the group was congenial, we had the day ahead of us and so

we stayed. Sheila and I acknowledged to the other group members that our experience in trying to agree on such things as covenants, visions, mission statements, and such tended to cause people to yawn and say something like "just takes too much time to come to an agreement" or "I've more important things to be doing," and "we have our principles to guide us, we don't need a covenant". But the things we heard and talked about in the workshop caused us to become interested in what a covenant of right relations would look like for our Fellowship. All communities go through ups and downs with relationships and we, like other groups, had experienced our own hurts over the years. It seemed like the right time to explore having a covenant.

We first asked ourselves how a congregational covenant of right relations was different from our "principles" printed on the back of the Sunday bulletin. We came to understand that the words on the back of the Sunday bulletin represent our denominational covenant with other UUs and the world around us, while our personal covenant of right relations would be about how we will be with each other in this community. Uniting in the common bonds of relationship rather than in obedience to a religious dogma is a distinguishing feature of UU. In the absence of a shared and uniting religious creed, we commit with each other through the promises we make about how we will be with each other in this community. The promises and commitments we make become our covenant. A covenant of right relationships provides the context from which we can act; a covenant can support the creation of an accepting, safe congregation.

We presented a Sunday service about covenanting with each other and circulated examples of covenants from other congregations. We invited Rev. Linda Thomson to facilitate a workshop about congregational covenants and received input from members and friends about what needed to be included in our covenant. Following the workshop, a committee was formed to sift through the pages of suggestions and create the covenant. Gail Moore and Najat McFarland joined Sheila and me on the committee. We presented our Covenant of Right Relationships to the Board and they accepted it. It was then taken to the membership for approval. The congregational Covenant of Right Relationships was accepted at the AGM in June 2016. It was decided that it would be included as an item on the Agenda at each congregational gathering. And if you are looking for the covenant you will find it framed and hanging on the wall on your way into the service area.

Sometimes Unitarian Universalist are asked, "If you don't need to all believe the same thing, what holds you together?" The answer lies in our tradition and practice of covenantal community. UU congregations, at their best, are communities where people come together with an explicit agreement regarding the ways they'll communicate, engage and explore together. UU theologian

James Luther Adams says, “Human beings, individually and collectively, become human by making commitments, by making promises.”

When you tell a friend that you attend the Unitarian Church, you might get asked, “What do they believe?” I’m not sure how you reply, but Rev. Thom Belote, a minister of a UU congregations in Kansas City responds by saying, “we are a covenantal faith, not a creedal faith. We share a covenant of how we try to be together, not a creed of what we all must believe together.

A covenant is a promise – or more precisely – a statement describing the ideals of relationship the members of our community have agreed to aspire to live up to. It is a commitment that goes way beyond “like-minded” agreement. It is a commitment to maintain appreciation and affection even in disagreement and conflict. It means everyone can think differently and work together. We are not bound together by what we believe. **We are bound together by the power of promising to be bound together.**

Covenant is about how we keep our promises, not if we can; how we reconcile, not if we do; how we separate in good and loving ways if we can no longer live into our shared vision with all parties involved. Covenant demands reconciliation; requires consensus; and assists with growth and change. Its goal, and our goal as a community, should be to live into our promises and admit when we cannot. We are always to seek out the ways that we can begin again in love. Rev. Nathan Hollister says that “we only break community and rupture covenant completely when we fail to try to live into it together.”

Covenant is what the 13th-century Persian Sufi mystic poet, Rumi, was talking about in the song, *Come, yet again, come* – However, the song in our songbook has left out part of Rumi’s original poem. Here’s the whole thing:

*Come, come, whoever you are.  
Wanderer, worshiper, lover of leaving.  
It doesn't matter.  
Ours is not a caravan of despair.  
Come, even if you have broken your vows  
a thousand times.  
Come, yet again, come, come.*

That additional line, “even if you have broken your vows a thousand times,” speaks to the nature of covenant. We fail. It doesn’t matter, says Rumi. Come, yet again, come. Even if you have broken your vows a thousand times, the vows still stand, broken but strangely unweakened, beckoning, inviting, calling, urging, whispering: return, re-commit, renew the heart’s promise of presence and connection. Come, yet again. Come.

That’s what covenant means. We abide in the life of covenant only by continually re-entering it.

Submitted by Joan Brewer on behalf of TUFF Board (with lots of plagiarism from workshop material)

## Our Covenant of Right Relationships With Each Other

### Preamble

To covenant with one another is to engage in the spiritual and everyday practice of loving better. Although this document expresses our written promise to each other, our true covenant lives and breathes in our actions. We will use it to deepen our bonds with one another; during times when we are loving well, it will inspire us to love better; and in times of conflict, we will use it to guide us. We expect this covenant to be challenging, but we also expect it to inspire us, to strengthen our relationships and deepen our sense of community.

1. We will communicate with and about each other in an open, kindly and respectful manner by
  - Listening mindfully with open minds and hearts
  - Not making assumptions. Checking out what we think we heard
  - Speaking from our own experience using “I” statements rather than “you” statements
  - Talking with and to people rather than about each other
  - Challenging and debating ideas respectfully and constructively
  - Allowing time for each person to speak
  - Communicating with others as clearly as we can to avoid misunderstandings, sadness and drama
2. We will seek peaceful and constructive resolutions when conflicts arise by
  - Avoiding taking things personally or making assumptions
  - Remembering that what others say and do is a projection of their own reality, their own dream
  - Forgiving ourselves and others and inviting people back into covenant with each other after a disagreement
  - Saying “I’m sorry”
  - Staying connected through difficult moments, trusting that we are each doing our best
3. We will work together for the common good of our beloved community by
  - Watching for opportunities to offer praise and thanks
  - Providing opportunities for us to have fun together
  - Pledging not only to tolerate but also to respect, honour and celebrate our diversity
  - Sharing the work of our community with our time and resources as we are able to

- Regularly reminding each other of the covenant we have made with each other

Grateful for the broad diversity among us, we willingly accept responsibility for our own behaviours and our obligations to honour the other. We freely enter into this covenant and agree to honour its spirit. We promise each other our help in upholding the covenant and promoting mutual respect.

This Covenant is intended to be a living document and was posted **September 2017**, following approval at the 2017 Annual General Meeting. As the Congregation attempts to live our covenant, we expect to discover new truths and better ways of working together. We will periodically incorporate our new insights into newer versions of the covenant that better meet our needs.



## Delegates at the CUC AGMs

We are seeking two delegates to serve the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton at the Canadian Unitarian Council's upcoming Annual General Meetings, on **Saturday May 11, 2019 online** and **Friday, May 15, 2020 in Halifax**.

This is an exciting period for members to be delegates at the CUC AGMs, as we expect some of us will be volunteering for the CUC National Conference in Halifax and many will be able to attend. If you are interested in serving as a delegate, we ask you to submit your application to the Board of Directors (send to both [Secretary@UFF.ca](mailto:Secretary@UFF.ca) and [President@UFF.ca](mailto:President@UFF.ca)), after reading the following information and links carefully. We are particularly interested in receiving applications from people who are interested in the UU movement beyond our congregation, and we will give special consideration to people who have never been able to attend a CUC Conference before. The congregation or individual members of the UFF may be able to contribute towards your expenses, or you may receive a reduction on Conference fees as a volunteer; for more information about both, talk to Jo-Anne. You will receive support and information regarding the role of a delegate and the online AGM in 2019 from Jo-Anne and Myron.

Delegates must be members in good standing of the UFF and willing to learn more about both the UFF and the CUC. Responsibilities of our Delegates are as follows:

- To attend the AGM on May 11, 2019, online at the Fellowship;
- To attend the AGM on May 15, 2020, in person in Halifax;
- To attend the online training session offered by the CUC to practise online voting, at the Fellowship;

- To participate in a meeting open to UFF members in February 2019 and February 2020, in preparation for the CUC AGM;
- To attend the resolutions plenary on May 14, 2020, and if possible, other Conference sessions during the weekend.
- To read relevant information from the CUC before the February and May meetings, including information on the CUC website, the CUC-Delegates (and possibly the CUC-Leaders) email list, and/or sent by regular mail to the Fellowship.

In your application, please address the following considerations:

- Demonstration of a keen interest in and familiarity with congregational and associational matters;
- Willingness to become familiar with proposed resolutions for the CUC AGM, other matters pertaining to the AGM, and Annual Meeting Rules of Procedure;
- Ability to facilitate discussion with the congregation about matters for the CUC AGM;
- Preparation to report to the congregational membership on the status of resolutions, the CUC's financial situation, and other matters of interest and relevance;
- Previous/current involvement with the congregation and/or CUC;
- Ability to travel and attend the resolutions plenary and CUC AGM in Halifax.

### Related Information from the CUC: 2019 Annual General Meeting

Mark your calendars for the 2019 CUC Annual General Meeting (AGM). This will be held in the Greater Toronto Area on **Saturday, May 11 from 1:00 - 4:30 pm ET / 10:00 am - 1:00 pm PT**. As with the past two AGMs, there will be full capability for on-line virtual participation, as well as in-person participation. On-line participation and delegate registration information will be forthcoming.

Here are some other things to consider in preparation for the 2019 AGM:

**Delegate selection:** we recommend that you select your congregation's 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/>

**Schedule time for CUC-related business:** make time



in your congregational calendar for at least one session in **February 2019** (CUC Month) for your congregation and delegates to discuss matters going to the AGM. Information about motions will be distributed in early January 2019 to congregations, and feedback will be received until February 28.

**What's in a motion?** Each year, motions are proposed for the AGM. Find out how to submit a motion and by when, who can submit motions, why a new motion may not be necessary, and a summary of previously approved motions on the CUC's Resolutions page.

If your congregation or group is considering submitting a motion, consult with the Executive Director BEFORE you submit a resolution. This will save you time! Email [executivedirector@cuc.ca](mailto:executivedirector@cuc.ca). Submit a motion only if: a) there is no previous resolution AND it addresses a completely new issue; b) is of national importance; and c) is timely.

General information on the AGM can be found on the CUC's website. Questions about the AGM? Email [executivedirector@cuc.ca](mailto:executivedirector@cuc.ca).

The next National Conference will be in **May 2020**, hosted by the **Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax**.

See also:

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



## The Kashf

by **Ali B Uthman Al Jullabi Alhujiwiri**  
translated by **Reynold A Nicholson**

The Kashf are the veils between humanity and the mystic relationship where the Sufis seek to be one with God. The author died around 1063-4 AD and the book was written in the later years of his life while he was teaching in Lahore.

He was born in Afghanistan and travelled widely.

The Sufis must uncover the veils between them and God to seek behind them. The First step is to seek Gnosis of God, meaning knowing him through cognitive and emotional knowledge. According to Mohammed, both men and women should do this. There were already many Imams with different stories and views from the People of the Verandah, as the companions of Mohammed were known, to the time when this was written and many varieties of Sufism in various countries with different doctrines. The Second is to seek unification with God. The Third is to seek faith. The Fourth is to seek purification from foulness. . Poverty is not essential as it can distract the mind by fears such as of hunger and cold The Fifth is to find prayer. The Sixth is to give alms. The Seventh is to find the value of fasting. The Eighth is to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. The Ninth is to find companionship. Detailed rules are given on how to put companions before yourself, but still maintain the direct relationship with God. The Tenth explains the phraseology and the definition of terms and verities of ideas which are signified. The Eleventh concerns "Audition" meaning the hearing and feeling the words of poetry, dancing, chanting and sacred music, particularly as it relates to the Dervishes and leads to whirling dance. He says this is acceptable if it is a true union and not just sensual.

The conclusion is that Sufism's final goal is severance of the heart from others, a heart empty of the deceitful world. This means severance from family and no commitment to the material world.

The depth of discussion in this book is remarkable, including comparisons and consideration of many other views within Sufism. Debate was a big part of Islam at this time. The author travelled from Afghanistan to Syria, Turkestan, the Indus and the Caspian and to Iraq and studied with many distinguished teachers before he died in Lahore. You will not be surprised to learn that Dr Arif lent me the book and if you would like to read it I can put you in touch with him, Sheila Andrew

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