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## Contents for April 2019

Upcoming Services .....	1
Board Update .....	1
Call for Volunteers .....	2
More definitions of Unitarianism and Universalism .....	2
Tea, Laughter and Conversation (TLC) .....	2
What is this Fellowship? .....	3
Yard, Book and Bake Sale .....	3
Caring Circle – Joys and Concerns .....	3
News from the CUC .....	3
Visit from Rev. Linda Thomson, CUC .....	4
“Dreaming” Workshop and Potluck .....	4
Women’s Pot Luck .....	4
Feminist Book Club .....	4
The Pagan Christ .....	4
Reflections on Hope (Trust) .....	5
REsources for Living .....	5



## Upcoming Services

*Hope is that lifeline we each carry; the possibility we see in ourselves and each other, the grace we extend and receive. Let us be keepers and givers of such hope.*

UU Rev. Mark Ward

Our theme for April is Hope (Trust). This month’s services will explore the term, and our congregation will discuss various aspects of hope. We will also mark Easter Sunday with a celebration of the renewal of love and trust.

**April 7** *Hope Is a Four Letter Word.* Heather Lunergan. The theme is for April is Hope (Trust). What does the word “hope” and how can we understand and use it? Drawing from various sources, Heather will present a series of readings and two “mini-talks” about Hope. Is it more than a four letter word?

**April 14** *Hope In Times of Despair.* Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes. Often we try to push despair out of our lives and find hope as quickly as possible, dismissing our own suffering and ignoring that of others. What if, instead, we were truly present to despair, deepening our compassion to act in solidarity with others? We will explore some of the times and places of despair in which U\*Us

were called to act, including the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s.

**April 21** *New Beginnings.* Eostre or Ostara is honoured on the vernal equinox as a symbol of rebirth and new beginnings, and Easter celebrates new life. This is the season of hope and growth. As part of this service on new beginnings, Ken and Sheila will be celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with a re-commitment ceremony. Lay Chaplains, family and friends will be participating. Followed by a Pot Luck Lunch for all.

**April 28** *Hope Behind Locked Doors.* Deby Nash will be the service leader for our guest speaker, Lindsay Gallagher, Executive Director of Bridges of Canada.

*Bridges of Canada Inc. is a national, non-profit organization that restores individuals and families who struggle with addiction and/or criminality by providing a supportive continuum of holistic care that includes trauma informed residential treatment programs, youth camps, and multi-faith chaplaincy services in both correctional facilities and community re-entry settings.*

Restoring Lives. Restoring Families. Restoring Communities.

**May 5** *Lay Chaplaincy Service* The CUC recommends that each congregation dedicate a service each year to the functions of the Lay Chaplain. This will be that service.



## Board Update

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes

The UFF Board met on March 3, and will be meeting again on April 14, a week later than usual because we will busy with Reverend Linda Thomson’s visit.

We are pleased to announce that Jenn Carpenter-Gleim was unanimously affirmed as our new Lay Chaplain at a congregational meeting on March 10. In addition, Patrick Daley and Jenn have agreed to serve as our CUC Delegates for a two-year term. Patrick and Jenn will vote online at the 2019 CUC Annual General Meeting on May 11 and in person at the 2020 CUC Conference and AGM in Halifax.

We are hard at work on bylaws, policies, and procedures. At our March meeting, we developed a plan of action to

update and share information in our policy and procedures manual, work on a Safety and Emergency Policy, deal with our social action bylaw, and form a committee to look at our use of space. I am collecting information from other congregations and CUC staff to inform our work. We will have an opportunity to discuss decision-making and policies with Rev. Thomson on the morning of April 8. We will share our progress and invite input from the congregation in the coming months.

Since I cancelled our Board and Committee meeting on March 23, the Board and the two Committee Chairs most involved decided to reschedule it for April 7. I am calling it the “Dreaming” workshop. Starting with our Transitional Meeting, continuing through the Stewardship Campaign and the budget process, we’ve been dreaming and planning together. On April 7, we’ll be brainstorming about projects, programs, and actions we would like to see UFF take on together. Applying the mindset of abundance rather than scarcity that we adopted during the budget process, we will dream of what we could do if money were no object. What could we do to reach out to others and to create a more visible, dynamic, and transformative presence in our local community? What values do we want to live out in the world, and what actions and activities are we interested in creating? Only then do we engage in focused planning or discernment, choosing the projects that call us and looking at the human and financial resources available (volunteers, grants, fundraising, stewardship). The workshop will be combined with a potluck and Rev. Thomson’s visit; it promises to be fun, uplifting, and full of hope (our theme for April).

As I mentioned, the 2020 National Annual General Meeting and Conference of the CUC will take place in Halifax. The theme for Conference 2020 is Making Waves! Building on the imagery of The Ripple Effect, the CUC’s campaign on water and its related environmental issues, this theme encourages and challenges UUs to make waves that practice radical inclusion, challenge the status quo, and push us to remain relevant into the future. The dates are May 17 to 20 (the long weekend). You will be hearing from me often in the coming months, both as UFF president and the CUC’s Conference Convenor. As the next nearest U\*U congregation to Halifax, I hope many of us will volunteer and attend the Conference. Fredericton U\*Us will be responsible for registration and exhibits (I will provide a complete orientation well in advance). The congregation approved a budget item to fundraise and contribute to the expenses of some of those attending. Please consider earmarking a portion of your donations to “CUC Conference.” If you are able to volunteer, speak to me and/or fill out the Google form found here: <https://cuc.ca/enews-march-26/#waves>

I’m looking forward to seeing many members and friends on April 7!



## Call for Volunteers

We are looking for volunteers to help in our Children’s program. Everyone in our family has been enjoying the opportunity to offer the program upstairs. We are thrilled to have the chance to get to know Lilli, who is such a joy to us, and meet a few other children. We would like to invite other members and friends of the congregation to volunteer on a Sunday morning or two in the coming months.

I offer curriculum support, so volunteers are not expected to come up with activities if they do not feel comfortable doing so. Most Sundays follow a simple routine of lighting a chalice with opening words, story time, a craft, and ending with a closing song. Volunteering in RE consists primarily of encouraging our small members to find joy, express themselves, learn compassion and have fun within our spiritual community.

If you are interested in giving of yourself and receiving much in return, please get in touch with Jo-Anne at [eldergomes@yahoo.com](mailto:eldergomes@yahoo.com).



## More definitions of Unitarianism and Universalism

“Unitarian Universalism is an evolving, organic, non-creedal faith. It celebrates both reason and intuition as means to create one’s own religious philosophy. Within religious community we practice unity in diversity.”

“Unitarian Universalism is a religion of memory and hope. It is a religion that requires individual responsibility for one’s actions and thought. In this liberal religion all theological perspectives – atheist, agnostic, theist, Christian, humanist, pagan – all are acceptable as long as they promote opportunities for healthy mental, psychological and spiritual growth.”

Sheila Moore



## Tea, Laughter and Conversation (TLC)

Wednesday, April 10<sup>th</sup> join us for conversation and a cup of tea. This month’s topic is “When growing up, what was your favourite children’s book?” We meet at the Unitarian Fellowship 874 York Street at 1:30. For information call Sheila 450-9021



## What is this Fellowship?

It is not the building, except to the extent that we have chosen it and made it ours and adorned it with the fruits of our time, treasure and talents.

It is not the music except to the extent that we make it when we blend our voices together to produce sounds lovelier than any one of us could make alone.

It is not even the beliefs, for we Unitarians have no single unifying belief—only the combined beliefs of each one of us.

This fellowship is the people.

Without me, without you, this fellowship does not exist.

Buildings may fall down, music may go out of tune, and beliefs may falter.

No matter. We are this fellowship. Without us, it is nothing, but with us, it can be **ANYTHING!**

Sheila Moore



## Yard, Book and Bake Sale

**MAY 25, 8am-2pm**

Bring in your good used goods. They can be dropped off in the entrance to the fellowship and we will check for them. We are planning a yard and book sale, silent auction and bake sale.

If you have questions or can help out, email

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## Caring Circle – Joys and Concerns

We are here for you. Let us know if you need help, would like a visit or would just like to chat. If you have joys to celebrate or concerns to share, let us know and they can be posted right here.

Coming up from your Caring Circle Various members will host small tea get togethers in our homes. Watch for an invitation or let us know if you would like to be included.

Contact: [Janetcra@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:Janetcra@nbnet.nb.ca)



## News from the CUC

By CUC Liaison Glenna Hanley

The Canadian Unitarian Council urged Unitarians and Universalists to attend local vigils in their areas in response to the horrific shooting and killing of Muslims at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand on March 15.

I know that at least seven of our members attended a vigil held at city hall here on March 16.

The CUC also issued a response to the shootings, which killed 50 Muslims and injured many more while they were at their Friday prayers. The response said in part: “Violence of this kind fuelled by hatred and fear cannot be allowed to exist. We choose to respond with love and refuse to respond with more violence.” You can read the full response on the website at [www.cuc.ca](http://www.cuc.ca)

(Our own president, Jo-Anne Elder Gomes, also wrote to the local Muslim community on our behalf, expressing our sympathies with the Muslim people.)

### Appointment to the CUC board

My minimal role as your CUC liaison just got a whole lot larger. I was recently nominated to serve on the board of directors of the national body. The way the process works there is no one competing with me for the job. So at the Annual General Meeting on May 11 my appointment will be formally ratified. I have already ‘attended’ one monthly meeting via the internet program Zoom. It will be a bit of a learning curve but I am going to give it my best efforts and hope I can do our congregation proud.

### Order of Canada

One of the fun things that were done during February’s CUC month was a trivia questionnaire. There was a question about UUs who have received the Order of Canada. Turns out there are plenty, among them popular children’s author Robert Munsch, writer Margaret Lawrence, former Alberta Lieutenant Governor Lois Hole (whom I knew personally) and Bill White, the first Black Canadian to run for Parliament.

### Reminders

The CUC annual general meeting is Saturday, May 11. Our two official delegates Patrick Daley (the second) and Jenn Carpenter-Gleim will be taking part in the meeting remotely through Zoom at the fellowship. But any member can drop in and follow the proceedings. The time is 2 to 5:30 pm Atlantic time. I will be going to Toronto to attend in person.

The CUC’s Truth Healing and Reconciliation Task Force is an ongoing effort with lots of activities. One coming up in April is Reconciliation Through Films. You can register up until April 10. The featured film is Angry Inuk which

you watch on your own then tune in to an online reflection group on April 24 and April 27. Again if you are interested in this very important social justice issue you can learn more on the CUC website. Just search for “Truth Healing and Reconciliation”.



## Visit from Rev. Linda Thomson, CUC

April 7 and 8. Reverend Linda Thomson, the Canadian Unitarian Council’s Congregational Development Staff for our half of Canada, will be visiting our congregation on April 7 and 8. She will be joining us for part of our “Dreaming” brainstorming session and our potluck on Sunday and will share some information from the CUC. On Monday morning, starting at 10:00, everyone interested is invited to talk to Rev. Linda about decision-making and policies. This discussion will help us with the policies the Board is working on. A light lunch will be served following the discussion.



## “Dreaming” Workshop and Potluck

April 7, 5:00 p.m. at the Fellowship

What would you like to see the Fellowship do if we had the funds for it? All are welcome to attend this brainstorming workshop, with a special invitation to all who are involved in programs and activities of the Fellowship or who would like to become more involved. We will be talking about major projects, innovative programs, outreach actions, etc. which we would like to undertake if the money were available. And some money may be available: I will be providing information about grants. Come and share your hopes, dreams, visions of the Fellowship in the years to come. Wacky ideas will be honoured, as will things we tried before and didn’t work. :-)

Our brainstorming session will include a potluck. The kitchen will be open by 4:15 to receive your contribution to our community meal so we can start the discussion promptly at 5. You are also welcome to arrive at 5 for the discussion and potluck. We always have plenty of food and we need your ideas!

Reverend Linda Thomson will join us for the potluck and talk about the Canadian Unitarian Council, the 2020 Conference in Halifax, and resources to help our Fellowship grow and thrive.



## Women’s Pot Luck

The next Unitarian Fellowship women’s pot luck will be held Friday, April 26, 2019. Deby Nash will host the gathering at her home, Apt.319 - 845 McLeod Ave. We gather at 6 PM and eat at 6:30 PM. Topic for discussion: Complete the sentence: “*When life offers you a lemon....*” or share how you move forward after a setback. For further information, contact Joan Brewer at [jebrewer@rogers.com](mailto:jebrewer@rogers.com)



## Feminist Book Club

April 14, 8:00 pm. Atlantic (watch from home). Second meeting of the monthly online Canadian U\*U Feminist Book Club at <https://zoom.us/j/328662153>. Our first discussion was wonderful! This is a “low-commitment, low-maintenance” book club. You don’t need to actually read the books or even talk! This month, we will be discussing *The Red Word*, by Sarah Henstra. Feel free to share your ideas or just listen. Open to all; queer-positive and intersectional intentions.



## The Pagan Christ

### Recovering the Lost Light

by Tom Harpur

Harpur concentrates on showing how much of the New Testament story of Jesus Christ can be found in the mythology of earlier religions, especially those of Egypt. He relies heavily on the late nineteenth century research of Gerald Massey and the early twentieth century work of his follower Alvin Kuhn. As Harpur is a former Anglican priest and professor of Greek and the New Testament at the University of Toronto with nine other published books on religious topics, we can assume there is also some of his own work and well-informed analysis here. This provides us with explanations of how Egyptian mythology, with Greek contributions, could have reached Israel and influenced the Gospel writers. He also cites many other authorities.

He concludes that the New Testament should also be seen as mythological images of the truth, as other sources have found no historical evidence of the existence of the New Testament Jesus. He dismisses the references in the Jewish historian Josephus and in Pliny and Servetus as later additions or forgeries. The problem with this is that proving someone did not exist is impossible. However he makes a good point that it is odd no written records exist for

Herod's murder of all those children. Most Christians would probably say the earlier myths were prophecies. Old Testament references have been seen that way.

Blaming third century church officials for fear of any similarity to pagan religions, Harpur examines ideas and written works that were savagely attacked and removed from Christianity at that time. This resulted in "The Lost Light". Christians may find it hard to accept the idea of a mythological Christ, but he says God gave us reason and we must use and accept it.

Harpur claims to have found this light in the myths. The story of Christ shows how the divine spirit of God can come into any human. This provides a new union of all religions and of humans and nature. It clarifies the meaning of ancient symbols. The cross, found in many religions, is the physical human attached to earthly life by the downward bar and still with spiritual life through the cross bar. It does not mean that God wills suffering and we must endure it as our due. The light underlines the danger of literalism. It clarifies the Bible, It emphasizes our responsibility for our own evolution and highlights the importance of nature's guiding role. It gives our church rituals more potency. It enhances our belief in life after death.

He does not deny the importance of New Testament teaching on the way to work for the good of others. Nor does he say he is no longer a Christian. The book finishes with a series of points for discussions. It is in the Unitarian library.

Sheila Andrew



## Reflections on Hope (Trust)

"Rules for happiness: something to do, someone to love, something to hope for."  
Immanuel Kant

"The glory of friendship is not the outstretched hand, nor the kindly smile, nor the joy of companionship; it is the spiritual inspiration that comes to one when you discover that someone else believes in you and is willing to trust you with a friendship."  
Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul  
And sings the tune without the words  
And never stops at all."  
Emily Dickinson

"When you have lost hope, you have lost everything. And when you think all is lost, when all is dire and bleak, there is always hope."  
Pittacus Lore – *I Am Number Four*

"While there's life, there's hope."  
Marcus Tullius Cicero

"Trust is the fruit of a relationship in which you know you

are loved."

William Paul Young

"The very least you can do in your life is figure out what you hope for. And the most you can do is live inside that hope. Not admire it from a distance but live right in it, under its roof."  
Barbara Kingsolver – *Animal Dreams*

"Something was dead in each of us, and what was dead was hope."  
Oscar Wilde – *The Ballad Of Reading Gaol*

"It is really wonderful how much resilience there is in human nature. Let any obstructing cause, no matter what, be removed in any way, even by death, and we fly back to first principles of hope and enjoyment."  
Bram Stoker – *Dracula*

"Liberalism is trust of the people tempered by prudence. Conservatism is distrust of the people tempered by fear."  
William E. Gladstone

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast;  
Man never Is, but always To be blest.  
The soul, uneasy, and confin'd from home,  
Rests and expatiates in a life to come."  
Alexander Pope – *An Essay on Man*

"You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us. And the world will live as one."  
John Lennon

"Everyone suffers at least one bad betrayal in their lifetime. It's what unites us. The trick is not to let it destroy your trust in others when that happens. Don't let them take that from you."  
Sherrilyn Kenyon – *Invincible*

"After all, trust is greater than love, and to truly trust another human-being is rare. Love can exist without trust, but trust cannot exist without love."  
Sammy Sutton – *King Solomon's Journey*

"Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not; remember that what you now have was once among the things you only hoped for."  
Epicurus



## REsources for Living

Rev. Dr. Lynn Ungar

In what is surely the most famous English-language description of hope, Emily Dickinson declares that:

Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune without the words,  
And never stops at all.

It's certainly not a definition that you could put in the dictionary, but, frankly, I haven't seen a dictionary definition that really gets at hope as I understand it. "A feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen" describes some piece of hope, but not, I think, the

whole thing. Certainly we can want something to happen without having much hope that it will. And we often hold out hope when we really have no reasonable expectation that what we want will actually come to pass. Somehow, hope goes beyond expectation and desire to a place where poetry serves us better.

Hope is the thing with feathers/That perches in the soul. Hope is a lightness inside. A lift. A conviction that even though we might not see any way to walk away from where we are stuck, we have wings. Hope sings the tune without the words—it doesn't depend on details and definitions and a workable ten-point plan. Hope just sings, because the tune is enough. And it never stops at all. Hope is not dependent on circumstances. It is a conviction, not a prediction.

Hope is more of an experience than a belief, somehow closer to faith than to expectation. But what happens when you lose hope? What if that feathered thing in the soul should, in fact, stop after all? It happens. For whatever reason, whether circumstances or brain chemistry, pretty much everyone knows what it feels like to experience silence rather than singing, hopelessness where once there was hope.

Of course, as Rev. Joanna Fontaine Crawford points out elsewhere in this issue, hopelessness isn't necessarily a bad thing. Giving up hope can look very much like the Buddhist practice of non-attachment.

In a section of his poem "East Coker" T.S. Eliot writes:

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope  
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing;  
wait without love,  
For love would be love of the wrong thing;  
there is yet faith  
But the faith and the love and the hope  
are all in the waiting.  
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:  
So the darkness shall be the light,  
and the stillness the dancing.

Sometimes we have to wait without hope, settling into the emptiness and the not-knowing in order to open ourselves to something new. Sometimes we need the stillness with no bird singing in order to discover the dancing at the heart of stillness. Sometimes we need to give up and sit still before we can discover a new way forward. Hopelessness can be our friend.

But I would say that hopelessness is not the same thing as despair. Hopelessness happens when the feathered thing in your soul stops singing. Despair sucks that bird up and eats it for lunch. The dementors of Harry Potter are the embodiment of despair. Despair is the thief of joy, of courage, of creativity. Despair lies. It not only tells you that the situation is hopeless, it tells you that you, yourself, are hopeless, useless, pointless. Hopelessness invites you to sit in the dark and wait for the sunrise. Despair assures you that the sun has been snuffed out, never to return. You can sit with Hopelessness in companionable silence. Despair will shove you off the bench and into the dirt.

Despair is an enemy that requires us to fight back. Luckily, we have weapons. Humor is a potent weapon against despair—it introduces lightness to counter Despair's sucking weight. Movement—action of any kind—fights back against Despair's lie that there is nothing to be done. There is always something that can be done. What you can do might not fix the problem, but simply doing anything that feels like a step or a lean in the right direction is proof that you have agency and choice. When you move forward, despair moves back.

And, perhaps more than anything, connection and community are weapons against despair. We know that the powers of greed and cruelty are more than any one of us can take on. Each of us can throw stones at those dragons, but there's not much hope that any of us can stand against their might.

But you know what? We have no idea what we might collectively be able to do. Certainly, no victory is guaranteed, but when people come together (in person, online, on the written page) then there is simply no telling what could happen. Love in the shape of justice has done what seemed impossible before. Connection creates possibility, and Despair cannot withstand possibility. Despair depends on your belief that the future is fixed and nothing can change. But simply the act of reaching out to connect with another person is a declaration that something new could come into being. Connection creates possibility, and possibility is, of course, another name for Hope.

*Editor's Note: the above was taken from the following web page where you may find additional information about the author and a podcast.*

<https://www.questformeaning.org/quest-article/resources-for-living-january-2019/>

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