



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)

## Contents for December 2019

December Sunday Services .....	1
Blue Christmas .....	1
Joys and Concerns .....	2
Social Responsibility Committee Sign-up .....	2
Quotations about the December Theme of "Awe" .....	2
Board Update: Stewardship .....	3
Eastern Region Fall Gathering .....	3
Cookie Exchange .....	4
Spring Yard Sale .....	4
Women's Potluck Gathering .....	4
Alcoholics Anonymous with Secular Focus .....	4
CUC National Conference, Halifax 2020 .....	4
Montreal Unitarians Oppose Bill 21 .....	5
La Methode Mila .....	6
Helping the Homeless .....	6



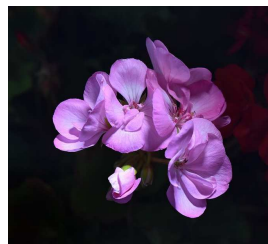
## December Sunday Services

December's monthly theme is "Awe". Sunday services are at 10:30am and at 874 York Street.

"These are what flowers look like when they stare up in awe at the night sky."

– Anthony T. Hincks

Photo by Bruce Berry  
copyright 2019



**December 1** *Be Who You Are*. Service Leader: Glenna Hanley. The third of three sermons from Rev. Peter Friedrichs, about the theology of the late Rev. Forrest Church of NYC. Church, diagnosed with cancer, developed a mantra that he said served him well for the remaining years of his life. It consists of three statements, the third of which will be the focus of this service. Service Leader: Glenna Hanley

**December 8** *Annual Carol Service*. Join various members of our congregation for an hour of readings, special musical offerings, and "singing!" We'll sing hymns of the season as well as secular favourites. And "You" get to choose what we sing. Very suitable for all ages!

**December 15** *Music and Spirituality: A Personal Jour-*

*ney*. Service Leader: Kevin Wylie. Plato wrote "Music is the movement of sound to reach the soul for education of its virtue". Kevin Wylie will lead an intimate presentation on how the lyrics and melodies of contemporary music have lead him to deeper spiritual growth, and will explore how this has helped him better understand love, loss, compassion and forgiveness.

**December 22** *A Multifaith, Multi-Age Celebration*. Lisa Rousseau and the Children's RE committee will be leading a special Sunday morning programming honouring the winter holidays and Holy days of several different faith traditions. You are invited to take an active role by reading a part or representing a role (no rehearsals involved!) or to sit and enjoy the presentation. More information will be available on Facebook and by email, or you can contact Lisa at [lisarousseau@gmail.com](mailto:lisarousseau@gmail.com).

**December 29** *In Awe of Fire*. Fire is a mysterious and powerful element. Just before the new year, we will take part in a ritual to put in perspective the joys and sorrows, the changes and transitions, the ups and downs of the year that is ending. In the ceremony of the burning bowl, Jo-Anne and Carlos will invite people to write down thoughts they wish to release to the elements of fire and water. Please note: There will be no program upstairs for children on December 29. If children would like to stay for the service, we ask that a parent or youth/adult friend accompany them for safety reasons.

**January 5** *The Compass: A Multigenerational Exploration of Integrity*. Coordinated by Jo-Anne and drawing from the UUA's Toolbox of Faith curriculum, this service will provide opportunities for participants to reflect on the directional compass as a symbol for our inner moral compass. Stories, games, and small group discussions will guide us towards our inner voices and to the teachings of other faith traditions, inviting us to locate our beliefs and principles.



## Blue Christmas

**Thursday, December 19, 7:00pm**. This annual service is for those who want to share a time of sacred contemplation 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. The service will be led by Jo-Anne and Carlos and designed for youth, young adults, and adults who may be struggling. Please invite a friend or neighbour to the service.



## Joys and Concerns

Wishing Deby Nash a successful surgery on Dec. 2 and safe travels to Halifax and back.

Hoping Margaret Fitzgerald is feeling better after a long session with a very bad cold.

Wishing Carlos a continuing recovery as he gains more strength after heart surgery.

Sincere sympathy to the family of Jackie Webster on her death at 97 years old. Jackie had an association with the fellowship since its founding over 50 years ago. She was a prolific journalist and famous for her Tuesday group that met on Wednesday and hosted many politicians. She was able to be there the week before she passed. Many of us attended the memorable celebration of Jackie's life. We will miss her.

Sympathy to the family of Allen Bentley. Allen was loved by many at the fellowship and following a memorable talk on Blake at TUFF, Haifa initiated a weekly meeting with Allen where he was able to share his vast knowledge at the Stepping Stone Centre.



## Social Responsibility Committee Sign-up

After several years of not holding regular meetings (apologies from Myron, the Social Responsibility chair and also treasurer, who could never seem to find time for the former) the Social Responsibility committee will be more active in 2020. All Unitarians who are interested in coming together for social action or to promote social justice in all its forms in the coming year, please let Myron know by emailing [m\\_hedderson@hotmail.com](mailto:m_hedderson@hotmail.com).



## Quotations about the December Theme of "Awe"

*We cannot banish dangers, but we can banish fears. We must not demean life by standing in awe of death.*

David Sarnoff

*How is it that hardly any major religion has looked at science and concluded, 'This is better than we thought! The Universe is much bigger than our prophets said, grander, more subtle, more elegant?' Instead they say, 'No, no, no! My god is a little god, and I want him to stay that way.' A religion, old or new, that stressed the magnificence of the Universe as revealed by modern science might be able to draw forth reserves of reverence and awe hardly tapped by the conventional faiths.*

Carl Sagan,

Pale Blue Dot:

A Vision of the Human Future in Space

*Because philosophy arises from awe, a philosopher is bound in his way to be a lover of myths and poetic fables. Poets and philosophers are alike in being big with wonder.*

Thomas Aquinas

*In awe, I watched the waxing moon ride across the zenith of the heavens like an ambered chariot towards the ebony void of infinite space wherein the tethered belts of Jupiter and Mars hang, for ever festooned in their orbital majesty. And as I looked at all this I thought ... I must put a roof on this toilet.*

Les Dawson

*There's no way we can possibly understand anything. But we can see things, we can perceive things, and we can wonder. We can just be in a world of awe and wonder. That's the best we can do.*

Frederick Lenz

*I'm in awe of the universe, but I don't necessarily believe there's an intelligence or agent behind it. I do have a passion for the visual in religious rituals, though, even though they may be completely empty and bereft of substance. The incense is powerful and provocative, whether Buddhist or Catholic.*

David Bowie

*Straight up from this road  
Away from the fitted particles of frost  
Coating the hull of each chick pea,  
And the stiff archer bug making its way  
In the morning dark, toe hair by toe hair,  
Up the stem of the trillium,  
Straight up through the sky above this road right now,  
The galaxies of the Cygnus A cluster  
Are colliding with each other in a massive swarm  
Of interpenetrating and exploding catastrophes.  
I try to remember that.*

Pattiann Rogers, Firekeeper

*Two things fill the mind with ever-increasing wonder and awe, the more often and the more intensely the mind of thought is drawn to them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.*

Immanuel Kant, Critique of Practical Reason

*I have always stood in awe of the camera. I recognize it for the instrument it is, part Stradivarius, part scalpel.*

Irving Penin

*I would like to do more in appreciating the mindset of the child. Maybe it has something to do with taking ourselves very seriously and with great disregard, as well as having a healthy does of awe and doubt for all else.*

Meia Geddes, Love Letters to the World



## Board Update: Stewardship

We are nearing the end of our Stewardship campaign, which began with a Stewardship Launch Lunch on November 3, 2019 and finishes with a Pre-Holiday Celebration on December 15, when we will celebrate all-things-UFF. Please fill out a pledge form and put it in the collection basket, give it to Myron or me, or bring it with you to the celebration lunch.

Good stewardship of our resources means not only collecting donations but also planning how to spend our funds wisely and to support our volunteers. During the Stewardship period, we invite committees and others to think about their needs and their dreams for the January 1 to December 31, 2020 fiscal year.

In terms of human resources, we have a strong team of volunteers at the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton. We can always use more help. Right now one of our greatest needs is to have a few strong volunteers to shovel and sand the parking area at the Fellowship. Please contact me or Ken Moore if you can do this. Another is for people to host Third Thursday gatherings in 2020. You may choose to show a Tedx Talk or a documentary present information on a topic of interest to you or related to our monthly theme, and then lead a discussion with members, friends, and visitors. Heather Lunergan chairs Adult Programs, but I can be contacted during her absence.

In terms of financial resources, our goal is a balanced budget through which we can meet the needs of the Fellowship; this includes assisting its committees in planning programs and activities, and keeping our building and grounds beautiful, warm, and safe. Committee allocations have been requested, and some members have also spoken to me about other items to include. These expenditures should be received by Myron and myself (email both of us, please) by December 15.

Following the Stewardship campaign, during which both pledges and requests are collected, we will establish the budget for 2020. During the same period, the "Treasurer team," Myron Hedderson, Jeff Frooman, and new interim treasurer Kevin Wyllie, will be making the transition to new software, reconfiguration of the treasurer's responsibilities, and the hiring of a part-time bookkeeper.

Here is a summary of upcoming dates for Board and budget items:

**December 8, 2019:** UFF Board regular monthly Board

meeting (11:45 or so, in the Board room upstairs) We will be discussing several points relating to finances

**December 15, 2019:** Lunch to mark the end of the Stewardship campaign following the service. Please submit your pledge forms and your committee budget requests by this date.

**December-January:** Myron will be completing his extended term as treasurer and Kevin will begin his term (January 1 to June 30) as acting treasurer. Jeff will continue with his work with our finances until the Annual General Meeting in June. We are very grateful to Myron for the enormous amount of work he has done for several years and are relieved that he will help us with the tax receipts one last time. :-)

**January 5, 2020:** UFF Board regular monthly Board meeting (11:45 or so, in the Board room upstairs) We hope to have a draft of the budget to consider at this meeting. (The Board may need to meet again in January to complete our work on the budget)

**January 26, 2020:** UFF General Meeting of the Membership: Annual Budget Meeting, following the service. Please save this date.

In gratitude, on this day-after-US-Thanksgiving, Jo-Anne

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes

President, The UFofF, 2019-2020



## Eastern Region Fall Gathering

**Ottawa, October 2019**

*Submitted by* Glenna Hanley  
CUC Liaison

I don't think it would surprise anyone to know that I, and other members here, worry about the long term sustainability of our small Unitarian congregation.

When I heard at the recent Eastern Region Fall Gathering that a lot of Unitarians and Universalists, from both large and small congregation, share my concern it was, in some strange way, comforting.

The First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa, with the support of the second Ottawa UU church, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ottawa, hosted a very successful Eastern Region Fall Gathering in October.

More than 60 people registered for the full Saturday of workshops. I am told that was a far higher number than the last eastern gathering. All eight congregations in the eastern region were represented with visitors from the neighbouring Central region and elsewhere, even a staff member from the Unitarian Universalist office at the United Nations in New York City.

I attended as one of the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) board members from the Eastern Region and as

our CUC liaison here at UFF. I was also there mining for any hints or information we could use here in an effort to keep our faith community a going concern.

One of the workshops I attended was *Vital and Growing Congregations*. I found this workshop very relatable to what is occurring here in our own community, even though the two presenters, Rev. Linda Thomson, congregational life leader on the CUC staff, and affiliated with the Hamilton UU church, and Ottawa's First Unitarian's development minister, Rev. Pat Guthman Haresch, both come from large churches.

All across Canada UUs are worried about the declining number of members, which has fallen below 5,000 nationally. And at the local level even the larger churches see a need to grow and attract new and especially younger members.

One message from the two presenters was to, yes, go ahead and try things to attract new members, but to keep things in perspective, remember that church attendance is declining all over the world. We are not alone.

"Church is not socially valued," said Rev. Guthman Haresch, or Rev. Pat as her congregants call her.

They also advised not to focus entirely on the numbers, but to find new ways to engage people, to try some (spiritually) deeper programs, engage in the local community and make people aware who the Unitarian Universalists are.

You need patience too. Even if you are known for taking in refugees, or participating in the Pride Parade, "It may be five years before you see a new member, (from that activity)," said one of the presenters.

Another challenge, in order to grow you may have to change things. But you can't assume that every established member is going to like those changes. (And then you worry about losing current members.)

Participants in that workshop shared their ideas for attracting new members. And they acknowledged that despite their best efforts these things don't always bring people in. If they fail move on and try other things. Promoting our rights of passage was another idea, because people who don't belong to a church often are looking for a place to have such ceremonies.

Other workshops were about racism, mental health, self-care, social justice programs and climate justice, being involved with the United Nations, and one workshop was all singing.

I personally find attending events like this, meeting and sharing experiences with other UUs in sessions, over lunch or at coffee breaks, is re-energizing and meeting the many great people that belong to this family of Unitarians and Universalists makes me feel hopeful.



---

## Cookie Exchange

Bring and share cookies for distribution to our Fellowship community.

Monday, Dec 9. 4-7pm

Enjoy the season and stay for tea.

More information. Janet Crawford [janetcra@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:janetcra@nbnet.nb.ca) for TUFF Caring Circle.



---

## Spring Yard Sale

Items welcome for our spring yard sale. We will have a couple of tables set up in the garage. If you are downsizing, remember the fellowship. We had a great yard sale in the spring and hope to have another one in the spring of 2020.

You can leave things in the foyer and let me know they are there so I can put them in the garage.

Janet  
[janetcra@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:janetcra@nbnet.nb.ca)  
454-0441



---

## Women's Potluck Gathering

There will not be a women's potluck in December. The next potluck gathering will be Friday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020. More information will be provided in the next Touchstone edition, but I can tell you that, by January 24<sup>th</sup>, days will be getting longer. For further information, contact Joan Brewer at [jebrewer@rogers.com](mailto:jebrewer@rogers.com)



---

## Alcoholics Anonymous

Many Paths is a new Alcoholics Anonymous meeting in Fredericton that has a secular focus. It meets on Sundays at 8:00pm at the Unitarian Fellowship. Anyone interested in recovery from alcoholism/addiction is welcome to attend. Meetings are confidential-in-nature and have no cost. For more information, you can email [manypathsfredericton@gmail.com](mailto:manypathsfredericton@gmail.com).



---

## Canadian Unitarian Council National Conference, Halifax 2020

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes

The CUC's National Conference takes place every two years on the long weekend in May. Next year, we are delighted to be within easy travelling distance, as the

Conference will take place from May 15 to 17, 2020 at King's College in Halifax, Nova Scotia. As the Conference Convenor, I am especially happy to know that many of our members and friends may be able to attend a weekend that enables us to fulfill our aspirations as a U\*U community: to be deeply connected, radically inclusive, actively engaged, theologically alive, and spiritually grounded. The theme of the Conference is Making Waves! and the Conference plenaries, Worship services, Streams, Multigenerational Workshops, and other activities will encourage us to practise radical inclusion, challenge the status quo, and push us to remain relevant into the future.

Our delegates, Patrick Daley and Jenn Carpenter-Gleim, will be attending CUC's Annual General Meeting on Friday, May 15; most Conference programs take place on Saturday and Sunday. Members and friends of the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton will be volunteering in various capacities on site. Our main job is Registration; although people register online, we will be the ones preparing and giving them their "pouches" (name tags with meal tickets, workshop information, etc.), selling meal tickets, and ensuring that the information we have recorded is correct. I will also need volunteers to help out at the CUC table (selling merchandise and giving out materials) and with vendors and exhibitors (helping people set up and operate their tables).

I will be orienting volunteers for these roles starting in February. All volunteer jobs are divided into manageable shifts, usually 2 hours or so at a time, enabling volunteers to attend most of the programs and activities. Three or four people are needed on Thursday (and if one or two arrive on Wednesday, that's even better); the majority of volunteers will be asked to do a short shift on Friday, Saturday morning, or Sunday morning. Please let me know if you can help! Having a couple of people to help with set-up is helpful, but most of these positions do not require mobility.

The Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton has set up a special fund to help volunteers and delegates attend the Conference. This money will contribute to the registration costs, which are expected to be between \$300 and \$350; we plan to provide the funds in time for them to register for Early Bird Registration (before March 31, 2020).

Our reason for contributing to registration costs is that these are fixed costs that represent a barrier to many members who could benefit from an opportunity to meet other U\*Us from across Canada and take part in amazing programs and activities.

Registration does not include accommodation, meals, or travel, however. Residence rooms and suites at Dalhousie are about 10 minutes away and will cost about \$110 per person a night. There also seems to be good bus service in Halifax if you would prefer to stay at a hotel. Meals will be served at King's College at a cost of approximately \$15 for breakfast, \$20 for lunch, and \$25 for supper. They

are served banquet style, and gluten-friendly and vegetarian options are available. We hope to be able to plan car-pooling to ease travel costs, and the Maritime bus to Halifax costs approximately \$75. each way.

I am happy to answer any questions you have about the Conference. Please email me at [Conference@CUC.ca](mailto:Conference@CUC.ca).

You can also check out the information on the CUC website at:

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

In addition, the Host Committee included a warm invitation in the last eNews, with an emphasis on making the most of the wonderful vacation opportunities in Halifax in the spring:

<https://cuc.ca/enews-november-26/#halifax>: An Invitation to Halifax From the Making Waves Host Committee



## Montreal Unitarians Oppose Bill 21

Submitted by Glenna Hanley,  
CUC Liaison for UFF

The Unitarian Church of Montreal has joined a coalition of Quebecers taking legal action against their government's secularism law known as Bill 21.

Coalition Inclusion Quebec (CIQ) is taking the Coalition Avenir Quebec (CAQ) government of Premier Francois Legault to court to stop the government from implementing this discriminatory law which will prohibit teachers, police officers, government workers, anyone working in the Quebec civil service, from wearing any kind of religious symbol in their place of employment.

The law discriminates against minorities in Quebec and Rev. Diane Rollert of UCM, who spoke briefly at the Eastern Region Fall Gathering in Ottawa in October, said one of the largest groups to be unfairly targeted by the law is Muslim women who wear the hijab and who will be prohibited from doing so. They will be forced to choose between following their religion or keeping their jobs.

The Legault government tabled the bill in the legislature in March. In May the board of UCM issued an official statement of opposition to the bill. The statement in part states: "Bill 21 stands in direct contradiction to two of the essential principles that guide Unitarian Universalist belief(s): justice, equity and compassion in human relations, and the inherent worth and dignity of every person. There is neither justice nor compassion in a law that targets the dignity of others.

In placing the supposed needs of the majority above the legal rights of minorities, the government of Quebec is sliding down a dangerous path. We cannot accept that a society which prides itself on individual freedom should curtail the religious freedom of citizens who do not belong

to the majority community. As Unitarian Universalists, we hereby declare that we will stand in solidarity with our neighbours, friends and siblings in the Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Sikh and other faiths if they refuse to accept the imposition of an unjust law.”

Later on the UCM board announced it was joining the coalition.

Lawyers are working pro bono for the CIQ but it will take a considerable amount of funds to launch this legal challenge said Rollert.

If anyone is interested in supporting this action by the CIQ against the discriminatory law you can find out how to donate by visiting the group’s Face book page. Search for: Coalition Inclusive Quebec

---



## La Methode Mila

by **Lydie Salvyre**

The book fits with our theme of attention, to what and why? It is by a French psychiatrist based on the idea that Rene Descartes seventeenth- century theory that we are because we think can be a disastrous way of living. The novel examines the life of a man in his forties, previously a devoted follower of Descartes, who takes on the task of living with his aging mother and caring for her as her mind and body get weaker. Understandably this is distressing for a man relying on his thoughts and he gets more and more angry with himself for his anger and frustration.

So he goes to Mila, a turbaned and face-painted adviser. Her method is said to be putting people in touch with their ancestors and the dead. She claims he has an Arab ancestor persecuted in Spain alongside a Jewish friend, in both cases they were making useful contributions to the life of their communities before this. Yes, this does expand his world and the expansion provides help to him and to others. Her daughter goes to spend time with his mother. Mila also takes on the cause of gypsies looking for a living space in the town and becomes very unpopular with residents who do not want them. He takes up the cause too and uses his Descartes skills to speak out but also learns to listen. As you can imagine, love gets involved and his mother too gets into a wider world. Much of the book is his notes to Descartes on life and love. So is it fair to say thinking of our ancestors expands and benefits our world? It is hard to know the truth about them. Is it unfair to Descartes to say his search for the truth was selfish and seeing our self as thought limits us?

A friend lent me the book and will gladly lend it to anyone interested. As you probably guessed, even though I can not find the accents on my computer, it is in French. Now it is time to read some of Descartes’ work.

Sheila Andrew

---



## Are You Interested In Helping the Homeless?

Currently in downtown fredericton there are over thirty people sleeping on the street each night. Therefore, the Fredericton Downtown Community Health Centre (FDCHC) and the third year UNB Nursing Students are working together to gather supplies for people without homes during the winter months. However, to accomplish this we are in need of donations.

Below is a list of necessary items if you are willing to donate:

- Hygiene products: toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, hand lotion, tampons, pads, hair brush, toilet-paper, Kleenex, etc.
- Shower essential: Shower shoes, flip flops, sandals, towels, face cloths
- Warm clothing: Any casual clothing such
- as jeans, socks, long sleeve t-shirts, button ups, sweaters, etc.
- Winter clothing: hot packs, jackets, hats, scarves, mittens, winter boots,
- hoodies
- Non-perishable food items: canned goods, hot chocolate, coffee, peanut butter, jam, cheese whiz, canned tuna, canned meat, canned veggies, water bottles, popcorn, spaghetti noodles, tomato sauce, crackers, etc. **\*microwavable foods\***
- Perishable food items: ketchup, mayonnaise, mustard, relish, sandwich meats, cheese, etc.
- Sleep essentials: Sleeping bags, blankets, pillows, pillow cases, sheets, bedding for single beds/mattress covers, etc.
- Travel essentials: Large book bags, thermos
- Cooking essentials: Pots, pans, dish cloths, plates cutlery, etc.

If you are interested in making a monetary donation, setting up a donation box, getting involved, or have any questions you may contact Nekeisha Lyons via email at [nlyonsl@unb.ca](mailto:nlyonsl@unb.ca) or by texting or calling at (506) 259-6454. All proceeds are going to:



Fredericton Downtown Community Health Centre  
Centre de Santé Communautaire de Centre-Ville de Fredericton