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March Sunday Services

Sunday services are at 10:30am and at 874 York Street.

The theme for March is "Wisdom." As well, we have one speaker who had prepared a talk for January, when the theme was "Integrity," but who was called out of town, and then freezing rain came. We are caught up, I think!

Knowledge is learning something every day. Wisdom is letting go of something every day. Zen Proverb

March 1 "*Five Smooth Stones*," a sermon from Rev. Shaun Newton from First Unitarian Church of Toronto. Service Leader: Heather Lunergan. The five smooth stones of liberal religion are concepts developed by the minister, teacher, and Unitarian ethicist James Luther Adams to describe the bedrock values that undergird our beliefs and support our principles as religious liberals. The Board will meet following the service.

March 8 *International Women's Day Service on Wisdom*. Service leader: Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes. Every year the Canadian U*U Women's Association produces a package of Worship and study materials to be used in March. This year's CU*UWA theme (as well as this month's UFF theme) is Wisdom. On March 8, International Women's Day, join us to explore different sources of wisdom and different ways of knowing and imagining

the world.

March 15 "*The Vernal Equinox*". Service leader: Tony Fitzgerald. Festivals of the season.

March 22 "*A World without Integrity?*" With guest speaker: Dr. Stephen Ward. As with "being ethical," or "being responsible," most people would agree that it is a good thing if individuals, officials, and corporations have integrity. But what does "integrity" mean, why is it important, and to what extent can society encourage integrity? The talk will look at the concept in ethics and psychology, and then pose the question: Have we created a polarized, social media world where integrity is ignored or is no longer important?

March 29 "*Aristotle on Friendship, Wisdom and Wonder*." With guest speaker: Dr. Andrew Cutler. Inspired by Aristotle and Ancient Greek philosophy, this talk examines the philosophical connection between the feeling of wonder, the pursuit of wisdom and the importance of friendship. Part one will categorize and unpack these concepts as found in Aristotle's main texts. Part two will look at how these concepts can play out in a contemporary good life and should make for a stimulating discussion.



Some thoughts on the theme of Wisdom

A popular riddle asks "What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom?" The answer is "Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit, but wisdom is not putting one in a fruit salad."

Wisdom is one of the oldest concepts known to mankind, and as a result, of course, everyone of note (and many others) have contributed to the discussion about what is wisdom, how is it to be used, where and how is it acquired or found, and when can we say something, or someone, is "truly wise." Here are some phrases and thoughts for your consideration. Try one or two as a conversation starter with a friend, or, if you are adventurous, raise one with a child or teenager. Who knows what wisdom you might

gain from the insights of others.

Age is a terrible avenger. The lessons of life give you so much to work with, but by the time you've got all this great wisdom, you don't get to be young anymore.

Elizabeth Wurtzel

Science is organized knowledge. Wisdom is organized life.

Immanuel Kant

The Ancient Greek word Sophia (σοφία, sophia) is the abstract noun of σοφός (sophós), which variously translates to "clever, skilful, intelligent, wise". ... In that work, the leaders of the proposed utopia are to be philosopher kings: rulers who are lovers of wisdom.

The teacher who is indeed wise does not bid you to enter the house of his wisdom but rather leads you to the threshold of your mind.

Khalil Gibran

The wisdom of the wise and the experience of the ages are perpetuated by quotations.

Benjamin Disraeli

Knowledge is proud that it knows so much; wisdom is humble that it knows no more.

William Cowper

To know how to grow old is the master work of wisdom, and one of the most difficult chapters in the great art of living.

Henri Frederic Amiel

Some folks are wise and some are otherwise.

Tobias Smollett

There are three methods to gaining wisdom. The first is reflection, which is the highest. The second is limitation, which is the easiest. The third is experience, which is the bitterest.

Confucius



Board Update

Although it may not seem that way I was writing this (during Thursday's snowstorm), spring is around a few corners. The Board continues to meet and recently reviewed its calendar / annual to-do list and are more or less on track. We are committed to helping people get to the CUC Conference in Halifax this year. At home, we are committed to providing a wide range of interesting talks and to caring for our people and the space in which we meet. Our beautiful, comfortable building and spacious grounds are a major asset and benefit to our members and visitors, and also represent our largest budget item; in fact, the cost of maintaining, repairing, cleaning, clearing, and in particular heating our building is similar to our largest income category, pledged donations. We should be mindful of our small gestures that can help reduce the costs; too often, the heat is left on inadvertently and we remind you

to turn the heat down and turn the lights off when you leave. I think it is just as important to imagine other uses of our space. We are a charity. Inviting others to use a room for a purpose compatible with our charitable status in return for a free-will contribution is an outreach as well as an income-generating initiative. I dream of seeing our building used for interesting and meaningful activities every day of the week. What do you dream of doing together in this space?

Dates to remember this month:

March 1, 2020: Did you know we have a defibrillator in the kitchen? Immediately following the service, Kevin Wyllie will give us a brief intro to how it works. It is apparently a simple process, and we want as many people as possible to feel comfortable with it.

March 1, 2020, 12:00 pm. Regular Monthly Meeting of the Board of Directors. We have returned to our previous schedule of meeting on the first Sunday of the month (barring cancellation of the service).

March 8, 2020, 10:45 am and 6:30 pm. To mark International Women's Day, the Canadian Unitarian and/or Universalist Women's Association invites you to take part in a Worship service at the Fellowship (in the morning) and online (in the early evening). Details at cuuwa.org or from Jo-Anne (this time as chair of the CU*UWA, at eldergomes@yahoo.com).

March 15, 2020, 11:45 pm. Meeting to prepare for the CUC Annual General Meeting. Our delegates would like to know your opinions on some of the matters to be decided by the membership at the AGM in Halifax.

March 15, 2020, midnight. Deadline for applications for a subsidy to attend the CUC Conference are due. Subsidy information and application forms can be found on the table in the library, or you can email me for an electronic form. Send your application electronically to President@CUC.ca or give it to Jo-Anne in person. The applications will be considered at an in-camera session of the April board meeting, and all applicants will be notified within a day or two of the meeting.

In gratitude,
Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes



TUFF Caring Circle Joys and Concerns

Our thoughts are with Deby Nash who continues to undergo radiation in Saint John.

We are also sending good vibes to Tracy Gleim as he struggles with a very sore hip.

Sympathy to the family of Vera Watts. Vera was a long-time member of TUFF who passed away recently. She

will be remembered for her love of animals, insects and plants, her kindness and for her spirit of adventure. She parachuted over 500 times!!

Thoughts are also with Carlos Gomes who recently had cataract surgery.

If you have a concern or joy you would like to share, or if you would like to help with our caring network, please contact your caring circle.

Janet at janetcra@nbnet.nb.ca



Conference, Conference, Conference

It's all about the conference and annual general meeting with the CUC these days.

You have already heard details of the May 15 to 17, 2020 conference taking place in Halifax from our president Jo-Anne in the February issue of Touchstone. And there is a special website cuc.ca/annual-general-meeting-conference where you can get more information and where you can register.

I hope as many members as possible will go as this is close to home. The CUC spreads this biannual event around the country so it may be a while before it will be back in the east again.

The theme of the conference is Making Waves, calling on us as UUs to "make waves that practice radical inclusion, challenge the status quo, and push us to remain relevant into the future" as it says on the web site.

There are some interesting streams and workshops to choose from, touching on a variety of topics. On Saturday some are climate change, living our spirituality in our everyday lives, racism and white supremacy, Canadian UU history. On Sunday workshops include personal action on global issues, building schools in Honduras, making the world a healthier place by eating well, multigenerational games and more.

The Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax is hosting and they are promising a great kitchen party on Saturday night and some other entertaining goodies over the weekend.

I went to the CUC conference and AGM in Hamilton in 2018 and took in some interesting workshops with great presenters. But I also enjoyed talking to a lot of people and youth members and learning how much we share in terms of challenges in our congregations and how others are meeting these challenges.

If you can't get to Halifax there will be some live streaming of some events such as the AGM. You can find out more about that on the web site as well.

The Wet'suwet'en Nation Controversy

Of course the CUC board and staff have been carrying on with other business. And the CUC has taken a position in support of the Wet'suwe'en hereditary chiefs who oppose a gas pipeline going through their traditional lands in northwestern BC.

The CUC National Voice issued a statement this month reaffirming the position taken by the CUC in January, saying that the hereditary chiefs were within their rights to protect their traditional lands from environmental harm and backing others who supported them.

The full statement was sent to all of you by Jo-Anne in an email on Feb 16 so I will just repeat here one key quote from the statement:

"WE DENOUNCE any attempt by Coastal GasLink Pipeline, the federal government, provincial government or RCMP to interfere in the rights of the Wet'suwet'en to occupy, manage or maintain their lands"

The CUC National Voice team is made up of three people, CUC board president Margaret Wanlin of Thunder Bay Ont., Vyda NG, CUC executive director and Rev. Steven Epperson, minister for the Vancouver Unitarians congregation.

The National Voice was created in order for the CUC to respond to public issues and events in a timely manner.

The statement sparked a lot of discussion and some disagreement among UUs on the leaders' list (that is an exclusive email group to which many congregational leaders, such as presidents, past presidents, ministers and other leaders in congregations exchange email messages).

One major issue was who speaks for the Wetsuwet'en First Nation. The hereditary chiefs have been leading the protest against the pipeline while the elected band councils are in favour of the pipeline. Some members questioned if the CUC should be taking sides, given the split within the First Nation community itself.

A tough one to answer and given I am a CUC board member I choose not to wade into the controversy publicly.

That's all from me, until next time.

Glenna Hanley
CUC Board Trustee, Eastern Region
and UFF CUC Liaison

p.s. Since writing this I saw this explanation of this complex issue. The band councils only represent their own reserves while the hereditary chiefs represent the much larger area of the entire Wet'suwet'en lands. - G.H.



CUC National Conference

May 15-17

University of King's College, Halifax

Have you ever attended a Regional Gathering or a Cluster Gathering? Canadian U*U Leadership School, or a previous version of leadership training? An Our Whole Lives (OWL) session, Renaissance religious education class, or a program at Ferry Beach? A workshop, training, or discussion offered by the CUC, either online or in person? An online CUC Annual General Meeting? If you've attended one of those programs, you may be able to imagine what it is like to be a larger group of Canadian U*Us, together in one place, spending the long weekend in May chatting, listening, learning, worshipping, and singing. This time we'll be playing the ukulele, too! That's what the Canadian Unitarian Council National Conference is like. (It used to be called the ACM— Annual Conference and Meeting—but now the Conference part is only held in alternate years; however, if people tell you how amazing their ACM experiences were, just translate and smile.) As noted in the Board update, the Board has made a firm commitment to helping people to get to the Conference. It is rare that CUC Conferences are held in the Maritimes, and as the closest congregation to Halifax, I have volunteered us to look after registration and exhibits. To make it easier, financially and logistically, to attend the Conference, we will be arranging car-pooling and encourage people to share residence suites with kitchens to cut down on meal costs. We are offering a subsidy of up to \$300 to cover registration. Our Delegates and volunteers are the priorities for receiving the subsidy, but everyone who applies will be considered. We are grateful to all of the individuals who have donated to or will be donating to our Conference fund and to the committees and groups who are doing special fundraising for it. This is an important project, and I hope that the opportunity for our members to feel more connected to U*Us across Canada and more involved in our denomination / movement will be a benefit to all of us on a personal, religious, and congregational level. All details about the Conference, including online registration, can be found here:

<https://sites.google.com/cuc.ca/cuc-conference2020/home>

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes
conference@cuc.ca



Unitarian Universalist Pantheist

Do you think you might be a Unitarian Universalist Pantheist?

Unitarian Universalism is a context where you meet sensible, tolerant people with varying religious philosophies for shared spiritual exploration and social action. But Unitarian Universalist congregations are focused more on broad spiritual exploration and social justice, and Unitarian Universalism in itself does not offer answers to life's ultimate questions. Many people need both a social context AND a belief context in order to feel comfortable with their place in the universe.

With its special focus on Nature and Naturalism, World Pantheism can be considered as one of the main flavours of Unitarian Universalism, such as UU Buddhism, Religious Humanism, Unitarian Universalist Paganism and so on. If you consider yourself an atheist or humanist with spiritual feelings and a deep love of nature – or if you are a pagan who enjoys nature-oriented celebration but does not believe in the literal reality of gods, spirits and magic – then World Pantheism may be the spiritual context you are looking for.

From: *World Pantheism*



Women's Potluck

The next Unitarian Fellowship women's potluck will be held Friday, March 27, 2020. Donna Y and Joan B will host the gathering at Fellowship House, 874 York Street. We will gather at 6 PM and eat at 6:30 PM. Topic for the evening is still to be decided. For further information, contact Joan at jebrewer@rogers.com.



Vera Eugenie Marie Watts

1932-2020

Passed away peacefully, at the age of 88, in the early hours of Wednesday, February 19th, 2020 at the Dr. Everett Chalmers Hospital.

Vera was born on November 19th, 1932 and is predeceased by her husband Walter Julius Watts (2008) and her daughter Madelaine Cynthia Nitch (2002). She leaves behind her sons Norman Rainer Maria Watts (Geraldine Canty) and Francis Xavier Watts (Angelika Watts) as well as her daughter Germaine Itha Tatjana Watts (Steven Goodine).



Vera's journey began in Klantendorf, a small village in what is now the Czech Republic, where she was taken into the loving care of adoptive parents Franz and Maria Leipert. In 1959 Vera, Walter, and their then young son Norman, immigrated to Canada with a small steamer

trunk and a lot of hope for the future.

While the early years in Canada were not easy, Vera had the vision and driving force to build a healthy and beautiful life for her family. An avid gardener, knitter, cook, baker, and lover of nature, she created a sense of abundance, even when resources were tight.

Those who were close to Vera knew that she loved all living things: her family, her many pets, her house full of plants, and the gardens and wildlife surrounding 'Casa Vera'. This love-affair was rivalled only by her life-long desire to read and learn.

Once labelled a 'firebrand revolutionary' for her liberal and life sustaining views, Vera sponsored four children abroad, and gave generously to a wide range of charities. Her vision, determination, and loving selflessness will be greatly missed.

A special Thank You to all the staff of Paradise Villa and especially those on Tranquility Lane who made Vera's final years so comfortable and safe for her.

As per Vera's request, there will be no visitation or service. Donations in her memory may be made to the Canadian Feed the Children charity or the World Wildlife Fund.

<http://www.mcadamsfh.com/obituaries/144528>

Many of us have fond memories of Vera in the many years she attended the Fellowship.



Canadian Unitarianism: An Idea of a Possibility

submitted by Heather Lunergan

Rev. Ray Drennan is retired, but his "Confluence" Lecture in Edmonton, at the CUC's conference in 2004, is worth reading and contemplating. What is the "Confluence" lecture? Well, it's all about Ministers who serve congregations in Canada and it's one of the many reasons to attend the CUC conference in Halifax. Funding for registration is available to UFF members.

<http://cuc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Confluence-Lecture-2004-Drennan.pdf>



At Home in the World Stories and Essential Teachings from a Monk's Life

by Thich Nhat Hahn

The author became a novice in a Buddhist monastery when he was sixteen in war-torn North Vietnam. He went

on to start Engaged Buddhism, working for peace and helping others in many countries. Vietnam exiled him and France gave him travel documents as a man of no country. That is part of how he sees himself, as one of no country and all countries.

The book is divided into one or two page stories from his life illustrating how mindfulness can be used for oneself and others. Mind is seen as the home, anywhere in the world and whatever the state of the body. This does not mean excluding the surroundings; we must recognize them and remove the negatives by recognizing them, sympathizing and making our own attitude positive.

There is no one section on mindfulness or meditation, possibly because some of his other books covered this. However the individual descriptions are intriguing. Mindfulness is dwelling in the moment, feeling one with the earth below when walking and expanding this to the nature around and union with all things. It is linked to breathing. This can mean one step is one deep breath in and another out for the next step. Apparently a Buddhist group walking up a mountain this way can confuse other hikers! Mindfulness is also joy in simple things like a child's pleasure in eating a cookie or a young monk's pleasure in doing the washing up. In dire situations, mindfulness requires shutting the mind's door and windows on the outside and breathing mindfully. We must realise that there is no past or present, future or now. They are all one.

Examples of mindfulness helping others include Hahn working with war veterans from both sides in the Vietnam War and enabling one to get past seeing a child die from an edible explosive he planted and to move on to helping other children improve their lives. Hahn and his followers also provided practical help to the Boat People escaping the chaos. He sees promoting understanding and compassion, replacing anger and despair can lead to world peace. We need to realise what can make a terrorist do such things and look deeply into our own consciousness and that of our society to find the roots of hatred and violence there and in the world. Then we can work together to develop sisterhood and brotherhood that is the spiritual heritage of all religions.

Community is essential to developing the power it brings. He has founded places for others to practice his teachings in many countries, a university and an on-line programme. Even inviting a friend to join you in mindfulness strengthens you both. Spaces with plants and flowers and trees must be developed to strengthen union with nature. He has held sessions for companies such as Googleplex and the technique has even been used to calm a political debate in India. Payment for all this apparently comes from donations, products of the land of the foundations and payment for his books.

The last sections return to the concept of time and the idea that there is no death or birth. We live in the past, present and future, in our trees, family, descendants and

communities, in the world and universe. Hahn wants his ashes spread to fertilise plants and trees as they fertilise each other in their moments. Hahn does not mention reincarnation as a traditional Buddhist concept and says early in the book that Engaged Buddhism also works for Christians and Jews.

He has been recommended for the Nobel Peace Prize, but was not awarded it, perhaps because of the difficulties of expanding the beliefs and methods and community to a level that includes nations and their governments. However, this is a powerful book and very helpful. Readers are welcome to borrow my copy.

Sheila Andrew

Free Ride to the CUC conference in Halifax

Dear UFF members,

If you are thinking of going to the CUC conference in Halifax, May 14 to 17, 2020, I can offer you a free ride. I have room for three people (with small suitcases). No charge for the gas as my gas will be paid for by the CUC. One catch is, as a CUC board member, I have to be in Halifax on Wed, May 13, by 5 pm for board dinner and meeting. I don't know about the Dalhousie U residence Le Marchant where we will be staying but I assume you can book a room there Wed. night (\$55, probably the best deal you can get in Halifax).

Schedule: Leave Fredericton around 12 noon, Wed., one stop at Aulac Big Stop for pie and coffee, arrive in Halifax by 4 pm- ish. Return trip: Monday am, time to be decided by me and the passengers. Let me know if you wish to join me. But last minute notice is fine with me, as I am going anyway.

Glenna 472-8431

Lambakahar-Brown Arrival Party!!!



Please join us for a celebration of the Lambakahar-Brown family. David and Victoria, and big sister Vita, are excited for the arrival of the newest member of their family in April, and would love to celebrate with their family and friends.

Festivities will take place on Saturday, March 7th starting at 12noon and ending at 3pm, at the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton @ 874 York Street (storm date, Sunday, March 8th).

This is a POT LUCK event (drinks, cake and kitchenware are provided; no alcohol). Please bring your favorite finger foods to share (label dishes containing common allergens like dairy, fish, shell fish and peanuts; vegan and gluten free dishes are appreciated).

Parking could get tight, so please car pool if that is an option for you.

Gifts are not necessary, it is your presence that is requested; for those wishing to give something, gift cards or cash would be appreciated.

Please RSVP to sara.miller5@icloud.com by March 1st.

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