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Sunday Service 10:30 a.m.

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June Sunday Services

June is a short but busy month for the Fellowship. This year, the usual activities have been modified in light of the Covid 19 reality. We have become comfortable with meeting by zoom, and are sharing through phone calls, facebook and other social media. However, some things are different this year. One of those will be our end of regular year activities, which will not include a picnic. Hopefully our Ingathering and Corn Boil will happen and can be bigger and better than ever (not sure that's possible!)

For June, we will have three Sunday services, since we are not offering one on June 28.

Services start at 10:30 am via ZOOM. Please connect shortly after 10:15 as the service leader/moderator has to admit each participant and it's nice if this has all been done by the service start. Please watch the congregational mailing list for the link to use to connect to ZOOM and the password required to do so.

June 7 "*Topic To Be Announced*" Service Leader Heather Lunegan on a topic TBA.

Board meeting follows.

June 14 "*Masks*" Decima Mitchell will do a presentation on the topic of "Masks." Decima says "I thought that it would be interesting, as well as topical, to focus on masks as protective devices. The bird masks of the plague years are an outstanding example. I'd also like

to look at protective masks for specific occupations, as well as masks that protect a culture against a particular threat."

June 21 "*Changes*" Service Leader: Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes. This has been a spring of many changes. In fact, our being and our lives are always changing. We are always yet to be, ever becoming, growing more human. On June 21, we will be celebrating joys, mourning losses, and marking transitions that have taken place over the year. If you would like to speak about a rite of passage or a special moment, please let me know by June 14.

This service is the last of our congregational year and will be followed (on the same Zoom link) by the UFF Annual General Meeting. Please plan to attend the AGM.



Summer Sundays

from members of the Canadian Unitarian Council

This summer, The CUC is organizing Summer Sundays across Canada. U*U members and friends are invited to virtual services led by various congregations across the country. Below is a tentative list of hosts, leaders, and some topics. Please watch facebook and our website for more information.

SERVICE TIME: As this is a country wide service, the CUC has chosen to work with a start time of: 5 pm AT/ 4 pm ET/ 3 pm CDT/ 2 pm CST & MT/ 1 pm PT so that this will not interfere with other services still being offered.

Please note that as of this writing, no plans have been made to have weekly gatherings via zoom here in Fredericton. This information is about the national services being offered, which explains the times.

This will be a safe way to travel the country without leaving home, and will offer those who enjoy a "regular" service, one they can share with friends old and new.

July 5 North Shore Unitarian Church (Vancouver) led by Rev. Ron Phares

July 12 Unitarian Church of Edmonton Topic: Victims of Genocide, led by Audrey Brooks

July 19 Canadian UU Youth organized by Heather Maclean-Smith

July 26 Unitarian Church of Montreal led by Caite Clark

August 2 Canadian Young UU Adults organized by Casey Stainsby

August 9 Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton Topic: UU History in the Fredericton and Harvey area, led by Decima Mitchell and Heather Lunergan

August 16 Saskatoon Unitarians led by Liz James

August 23 Grand River Unitarian (Kitchener) led by Rev. Jess

August 30 Westwood Unitarian (Edmonton) Topic: Nature in the 6 Sources, led by Rev. Anne Barker



Joys and Concerns

Nick Barnes, grandson of Ken and Sheila Moore, graduated with honours from Eastern College in Supply Chain and Logistics.

Tamara Frooman graduated from university and will be starting her masters of fine arts in creative writing in the fall.

So glad that Deby Nash is back with us and able to join us on zoom and also go for walks.

Eileen Knight is doing well recovering from a fall and a broken hip

Congratulations to Dr. Suzanne Lanery, who now has an open work permit. She can work more places here and take the next steps toward becoming a Canadian citizen.

Genevieve, Betty, Nancy and Lulu are pleased to be able to socialize at a distance at St. Anne's Court after a long time in isolation.

We have a number of volunteers who are willing to do pick up and deliveries. See last month's touchstone or you can call Janet 454-0441 janetcra@nbnet.nb.ca

Thank you to the many people who have offered to help out during COVID.

If you would like to join Tuff Caring Circle on Facebook, the link is:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/247416469728195/?epa=SEARCH_BOX

It provides a chance to connect with community.



Virtual AGM, Orientations, and Meetings

This year, for the first time in our history (and perhaps not our last) the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton will be holding our Annual General Meeting on the Zoom platform. The Caring Circle are contacting people to ensure they are comfortable using Zoom, joining by phone, or appointing a proxy who is. We are also organizing orientation sessions. It is important for all people, including those on our Zoom team, to attend one of the meetings to learn the procedures for speaking, voting, etc.

Please note the following dates for your calendar and save this email for future reference.

June 3: Last day for the Board to receive Committee and leadership reports (Send to your VP, AVP, and copy to President@UFF.ca)

June 7, 12:00 pm. Regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors (same link as Sunday Service)

June 8, 4:00 pm. AGM Orientation (see information below)

June 14, 12:30 pm. AGM Orientation (see information below) Also, the Annual General Meeting package, including proxy forms, will be sent to the membership

June 21, 12:00 pm. Annual General Meeting (same link as Sunday Service, following our end-of-the-congregational-year worship)

Zoom information for all three Orientation sessions

Topic: **AGM Orientation**

Dates and Times:

Jun 8, 2020 16:00 (4:00pm) Jun 14, 2020 12:30 pm

Jun 20, 2020 13:00 (1:00 pm)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92763996748>

(no spaces, please cut and paste in your browser or click on the link in the email which will be resent the day before the session)

Meeting ID: 927 6399 6748

Password: AGM

Dial by your location (long distance charges to Montréal)
+1 438 809 7799 Canada

Meeting ID: 927 6399 6748

Password: 579736

We encourage all members and interested friends to attend the Fellowship's Annual General Meeting. We want to

know your opinions and we want you to participate in our decision-making and community-building.

Jo-Anne Elder,
President of the
Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton, 2019-2020



CUC Conference 2020 / 2021

I know many UFF members and friends were looking forward to going to Halifax for the Canadian Unitarian Council's National Conference this year. As Conference Convenor, I want to encourage you all to mark the May long weekend on your calendar for next year. We are hopeful that many of the programs and events we have already planned will be able to be presented in-person at that time. As you know, we have a fund to provide subsidies for our Delegates, volunteers, and others to attend the Conference. A second Delegate will be chosen by the new Board to attend the 2021 and 2022 CUC AGMs on our behalf, to join Myron who served this year and will represent us at the 2021 AGM in Halifax. I plan to continue helping with the Conference. Any questions you have can be sent to me at jo-anne@CUC.ca.

Although the in-person Conference couldn't be held in 2020, the Opening Gathering on Friday night, the AGM on Saturday afternoon, and a Cross-Country Worship Service on Sunday morning, and breakout conversations, along with and a workshop the following weekend, gave us an opportunity to see old friends, meet new people, and appreciate virtual events. The Sunday Service attracted approximately 1000 UUs from across Canada in a large-scale event shown live on Zoom and on YouTube.

For those of you who missed these amazing events or would like to see it again, here are some links. (You can copy and paste them in your browser or go to YouTube and search / subscribe to "The Canadian Unitarian Council" channel.)

Cross-Canada Worship Service:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7PcdM19FRg>

Videos of past Conferences:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJ251MWQwrxSnry11bdBS-g/videos>

Duet of "Making Waves," a song written for the Conference by James Morris of the Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax (the Host congregation)

<https://youtu.be/ouwmIs2VUkc>

Enjoy!

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes
Conference Convenor,
Canadian Unitarian Council



CUUWA Notice

All are invited to attend!

CANADIAN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION (CUUWA) CROSS-CANADA CONVERSATION and ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

June 27, 2020 Starting at 16:00 (4pm) Atlantic

First hour: Cross-Canada Conversation: Envisioning and Creating the World We Want Second hour: Annual General Meeting

To join the CUUWA 2020 Annual General Meeting

Online: go to Zoom.us "Join a meeting."

Meeting ID: 886 0535 4355

Password: CUUWA

By phone (long-distance charges to Montréal):

+1 438 809 7799 Canada

To join the CUUWA or renew your membership, please contact Jo-Anne for a form and information.

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes,
Chair, CUUWA



About Bubbles: a Virtual Community

**Another Personal Reflection
in Lieu of a Board Update**

We are all continuing to find creative ways to learn and to connect and to gather during the Covid-19 crisis. I am happy that so many people are coming to our virtual services each Sunday and thrilled that over 1000 UUs from across Canada experienced the CUC Cross-Canada Worship service on the May long weekend. It was a fabulous service and something we will be able to watch and listen to in the future. A new song was composed for the "Halifax" Conference and will be sent out to congregations; the composer, James Morris, has generously agreed to make the sheet music available as well. And as you know, this year UFF is planning our first-ever Annual General Meeting in a virtual format. Although that means some different procedures for connecting, speaking, voting, and so on, I am optimistic that many people will be comfortable attending from their homes.

In the interests of everyone's health and safety, the UFF Board of Directors passed the following motion at its regular monthly meeting on May 3, 2020:

Motion: Until the situation changes considerably, we will continue with virtual services and meetings, and not hold in-person meetings until at least September. The new

Board is asked to revisit the decision at that time. Carlos/Myron. Approved

This motion was presented because of our concerns about individual visits as well as group gatherings in our building. While the Province of New Brunswick will be loosening its restrictions on gatherings (in fact, it did so just a few days after we passed our motion and again a week ago), any organizations or businesses which reopen are still required to formulate an operational plan to guide the use of its space. The Government's guidelines for businesses reopening apply to us as a not-for-profit organization as well as to businesses (including any business that could be carried on by anyone who uses our space). We are not a "family and friends" bubble; we are an organization and have to follow distancing, access, and cleaning guidelines and we have to monitor compliance. The board, the legal owner of the building, is liable for any infringements. Brief visits by individual members are also included affected, so we have changed the door code and are restricting use of the building to regular checks by Ken and to the necessary actions to maintain facilities, repair equipment, etc.

This motion has already caused a great deal of discussion by leaders and members of the Fellowship. I think our divided opinion reflects a difference in approach to the pandemic and perhaps to health and safety issues in general. It may also reflect a difference in our need for face-to-face contact and our idea of community.

I admit that I have strong feelings about our moral responsibility to keep others in the community safe and the urgency and importance of this responsibility. I kept my children away from the Fellowship when as soon as they may have been exposed to chickenpox, before they showed any symptoms. (That turned into the family chicken-pox episode from September to December 1999) and kept them home from school when they were even mildly ill. On the other hand, I realized that our group microbiome was rich and diverse and didn't follow instructions about using separate spoons when feeding twins ("they're family germs, it's ok"). In other words, I was concerned about others catching something from us but not about us catching things from each other. I already had a sense of the resilience of our family bubble. We took care of our children's emotional and physical well-being and were privileged to have access to vaccinations, good physicians, nutritious food, comfortable shelter. Over the years, through major physical and mental health issues, we and our children have become even more aware of that privilege. We have a sense of responsibility that inspires us to take care of each other's well-being and to give back to the community. When Carlos had cancer, when he had his heart attack, when we faced life crises, we pulled back into our bubble. And that is what we have been doing since the beginning of March, when Anneke made the difficult decision to stop seeing us and suggest we isolate. This time, however, we are doing it more to ensure the safety of others we might

meet or gather with as to protect ourselves.

Carlos and I and our family have long years of experience in working from home, living a family-centred existence, coping with financial and logistical problems, and connecting with those we love who live far away. I have the added experience of being a volunteer with the Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) and serving in national roles and committees with the Canadian Unitarian Council and the Canadian U*U Women's Association. When I stop and think about it, as I have often over the years, my UU community meets most often outside the Fellowship building. Whether I look at the percentage of volunteer hours or activities or people, my sense of religious identity, or my spiritual growth, I live and serve and connect "beyond brick and mortar." Reverend Christopher Wulff, whom I met as an active youth member of the CUC when Jeremy attended the first Canadian youth con, presented a series of sermons entitled "Beyond Brick and Mortar," as part of a born-inner / young adult movement to reimagine "church" and UU community. When we talked about this last week at our CUUWA Council conversation on "envisioning the world," he mentioned that although he didn't expect the kind of changes this pandemic has brought about, we have long been preparing ourselves for this type of shift to virtual space. Similar things have been shared by CLF ministers. In Fredericton, we have always been away from the centre, and connecting online gives us a voice in the decisions and an ear and eye on the thoughts of others and how they are evolving.

Also, I love change. Another reflection shared in the same conversation is that leaders and ministers need to meet their congregations where they are, but not leave them there. A reading I will be offering to you on June 21 asks these questions: "How will we be renewed in this moment? How will we be changed by this hour? How will we be transformed through this gathering of beloved community?" I come to gatherings to be changed. I made a commitment to this religion in order to follow my spiritual journey, wherever it led me, because UUism held out the promise of unending learning opportunities and unexpected discoveries. Raising children in this faith has reinforced the value of change.

As I wrote in previous messages, I recognize that many of our feelings are based in fear or the trauma that isolation can revive. This may be true for our disagreements and our impatience about reopening, as well. What I see as caring and an opportunity for delving deeper into self or to focus on a limited number of connections may be viewed as fear of returning to reality. Let me assure you that I am not afraid to "get back to normal" or to move into a "new normal." I just don't want to. There has not been enough real change yet. We are still learning to do things in new ways, to live smaller and simpler lives, to sustain local entrepreneurs, to refrain from wasteful travel or business practices. More importantly, we have not figured out how

to do things in a way that does not cause huge injustice. We may all be in the same storm, but we are not in the same boat: how do we send out enough lifeboats for those who are poor, vulnerable, racialized, queer, the women who are in danger in their own homes, all who are more affected by the pandemic than most of us at the UFF are?

In my opinion, keeping our building closed is a way of creating justice. When the UUA recommended strongly that congregations plan for ongoing virtual gathering and operations through May 2021, UUA President Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray wrote: "In making our recommendations, we are guided by science and our deepest held values. This pandemic teaches us that our actions directly impact the health and well-being of our neighbors and so it is imperative that we make choices that keep our congregations and larger community safer. As COVID-19 disproportionately impacts people with disabilities, Black people, Indigenous communities, Latin people, the elderly, and essential workers, a majority of whom are women and women of color, religious communities have a moral responsibility to do all we can to reduce risks for those already at such high risk." (You can read more about the UU values-based approach to reopening here:

<https://www.uua.org/safe/pandemics/gathering-guidance>

I am particularly moved by the statement that "Recognition that we are part of an interdependent web and, as such, our risk-taking and our protective actions affect far more than just ourselves." That relates to my discussion of my family's microbiome and yours.

Our motion asks the 2020-2021 UFF Board of Directors, to be elected a few weeks from now, to review the motion in September. By that time, things will have changed even more. I hope that our congregation will be guided by our responsibility to other beings in the interdependent web.

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes



A Weekend On Line - Not So Bad Really

When I was in my early 20's I lived with one of my sisters for a while. Something she did that really ticked me off was that she would go off to a party and the next morning tell me what a great time she had. And then say, "You should have gone".

Of course she ignored that fact that she hadn't invited me to go along or told me about the party in advance.

So this report on the on-line Canadian Unitarian Council(CUC) annual general meeting (AGM) and some salvaged bits of a national conference will be something like that. Sitting right here at home in front of my laptop I had a great time. Although you were all invited, of course, not everyone could or would attend this virtual experience.

Never having held the AGM completely on line before, and never having tried to produce on-line some remnants of what was to have been an in-person national conference, no one really knew what to expect of that May long weekend.

But from CUC staff, to board members, to delegates and members of congregations all across Canada, the on-line version proved to be a tremendous success.

Let me back up here and say that there was a four-day conference and AGM planned for the May long weekend in Halifax. Most of the planning was done or well in advance when along came COVID-19. Well we all know what that meant. Large gatherings were banned and the conference had to be cancelled.

The staff at CUC and many volunteers, ministers, and a technology team, put their heads together and saved the day with a virtual replacement for the cancelled event. Executive director Vyda Ng said in a recap of the weekend that the staff and volunteers "had a lot to learn" and that they "imagined and made things happen that we might not have thought about before".

I will just touch on some highlights, beginning with the last event first. On the Sunday, May 17, there was a national Sunday service, the first ever, and it was amazing. There were over 1,000 people tuning in to the service.

The Zoom service hit its limit at 500 people and fortunately it was also being broadcast on the CUC's You Tube channel (that's where I picked it up after I got shut out on Zoom). What an amazing experience to think you were in the company, so to speak, of over a thousand other UUs. Of course the Zoom system can't give you an exact number because at many computers there were two or more people sharing a screen. I saw 476 recorded on the You Tube channel but of course that number was much higher, again because of more than one person sharing a screen. It was also an international event with people from other countries checking in.

The service had four ministers from Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Rev. Norm Horofker of the Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax leading the service.

The theme was *One Storm, Many Boats*, a spin-off from the conference theme which was *Making Waves*. There was music and singing groups from people all across the country, a children's story from Vancouver by board member Kiersten Moore, and even a ukulele session.

Despite the challenges of the technology it all went off with barely a hitch, as did all the other events of the weekend.

That service was recorded and you can still watch it on the CUC You Tube channel.

The weekend started on the Thursday night with a plenary session. One of the topics was how congregations were managing through this pandemic. Like us many congregations had put their Sunday services on line, with Zoom

and other platforms. Many were pleasantly surprised to see their attendance numbers increased. One small congregation saw their attendance double. Several people talked about how they might incorporate this on line version into regular services when things go back to normal.

Friday night was the National Gathering. This was another well done event with the highlight a virtual parade featuring the banners of many congregations and photos from each one. We had our banner in it and photos you might recognize. (I am trying to find out if it is recorded anywhere so you can watch it.)

Saturday was the AGM and again the technology worked well, including the voting system which delegates seemed to have mastered. There were 97 delegates and more than 100 observers.

The financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on congregations was discussed. The CUC itself has revised its own budget in anticipation of a decline in revenues.

Well in spite of all that praise for the on-line event I am certain there is still a lot of longing for an in-person conference next year. It has been decided by the board and the hosts, UUC of Halifax, that the conference will go ahead there in 2021.

Hope we can have a good number of our members attend.

From Glenna Hanley,
Board member of the CUC
and CUC liaison for UFF



My Year as Lay Chaplain

Jenn Carpenter-Gleim

In April of 2019 you gave me the incredible honour of becoming one of your Lay Chaplains. It has been one of the most amazing years of my life! To be able to represent the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton and to help people celebrate their rites of passage is an incredible honour and privilege. I was excited to be able to perform weddings and I was also looking forward to the opportunity for growth that officiating funerals would give me.

Before taking on my duties as Lay Chaplain I was off to Toronto for a weekend of training. This was an amazing experience. There were 10 of us from across the country all beginning our journey at the same time. We were given an extensive amount of information to aid us in the ceremonies we would perform. We had the opportunity to do some roll playing affording us the opportunity to become more comfortable with everything from public speaking to interviewing families to writing ceremonies. It was an intense and amazing three days of learning. We all got to know each other quite well and I am happy to still be in touch with many of my fellow lay Chaplains. It was an

outstanding experience.

My first official act as Lay Chaplain was to attend the Death Expo on behalf of the Fellowship. The Death Expo was an exhibition of vendors put together with the intention of offering information on death and dying in Fredericton. I had several wonderful conversations with people who loved the idea of having a funeral that was less traditional. It was an incredible opportunity to tell people about the Unitarian faith and what we value and what we have to offer.

I did, not too long after, have the privilege of officiating at a celebration of life for the wife of a woman I had spoken with at the Death Expo. The celebration of life was held in our building. The building was filled with family and friends celebrating the life of a woman they all loved dearly. There were tears and an incredible amount of laughter. Such a beautiful celebration. I had been nervous as this was my first funeral but it came together very well. I will admit that at one point during the service I had to pause to hold myself together as the emotion was quite overwhelming, however I did not cry. The spouse of the deceased said that my display of compassion made it seem even more authentic and she was grateful to see my humanity. When I thought about it afterwards I thought I would have to work on that but I also know that I am just a sensitive soul and I may not be able to nor should I maybe even consider changing that.

A few months later I was given the opportunity to officiate at another funeral. It was a smaller, grave side ceremony but still beautiful in its own way. We honoured the gentleman who passed and gave him a dignified final goodbye.

I certainly never anticipated that I would like officiating at funerals. They are difficult and sometimes heart wrenching but to be able to support loved ones in their time of grief is indeed an honour.

In the time since I became certified to officiate weddings I have had the honour of joining 27 couples! This has brought me such immense joy. Every couple has been unique and wonderful in their own way. The one thing though that they all had in common was that they wanted an authentic to them ceremony. I can honestly say that I have whole-heartedly enjoyed each and every one! Getting to know these couples and help plan their ceremonies is a wonderful process! Being part of their love story is such a treat.

Because there have been so many, I can not tell you about them all but I would love to tell you about a few of these incredible couples.

The very first couple I married were Sandra and Frank. Sandra had contacted me originally because she was adamant about having a female officiant. I met with the couple and helped them create a ceremony that felt true to them. They were so loving and respectful of each other and what they were about to do! Their small living room

ceremony was exactly what they wanted and I felt lucky to have such a great couple to work with for my first try at being a wedding officiant. The day before the wedding while I was speaking with the Mother of the Bride I realized that I had known the Bride as a child. She grew up down the street from us and went to school with my younger brother. This knowledge just made everything more special. After I left the reception (the bride insisted that I stay) it dawned on me that I hadn't been, at all, nervous. I became certain that I am doing exactly what I am meant to be doing.

Before we met, Starr and Dustin told me that they had already been dumped by a previous officiant because apparently he wasn't comfortable with their theme. Greasy, red neck wedding! I was, of course, a bit cautious but when I met them I liked them right away. The bride and I bonded over peace tattoos! They were a delightful couple and clearly very much in love! The wedding was casual and beautiful and fun and when I pronounced them husband and wife a family friend shot off a rifle. (The coupe warned everyone that this was going to happen.) Everyone had a wonderful time and it was an opportunity to learn that often times stereo types are unfair.

Kelly and Derek gave me the opportunity to perform my first Hand Fasting ceremony! I had been worried about the ceremony going smoothly but my worry was unfounded because it went off without a hitch. Hand fasting ceremonies are absolutely lovely!

Laughter was the name of the game for Emily and Chris. They said that they wanted to make sure that everyone had fun at their wedding. Their ceremony began with the entire wedding party dancing down the isle to Steeve Windwood's Higher Love and silly dancing was encouraged. Although the wedding was formal and respectable there was a great deal of humour. The couple wrote their own vows and they obviously share the same sense of humour. The entire ceremony was filled with laughter and love and it was such a joy to officiate.

In September I had the honour of officiating for the wedding of Carrie and Jace. Jace had just recently begun the transition from female to male and so the couple was, understandably, concerned about finding someone who would be sensitive to their particular situation. It was wonderful to be able to help this couple come up with a ceremony that felt absolutely authentic to them. I am happy to say that there wasn't a dry eye in the place. The loved flowed! It was a beautiful day!

Adam and Steve gave me the opportunity to marry my first same sex couple. They had been together for 15 years. I knew Adam as we had worked together years before and he told me that when he saw that I was officiating he knew the time was right to make it legal. It was a fun challenge to take the traditional wedding ceremony and tweak it a bit for two grooms. I enjoyed that immensely and was thrilled to be able to be a part of this special day.

Michelle and Neil had also been together for years and wanted to make their wedding, and I quote "as low key as possible". For this couple that meant that we all wore jeans and stood outside on their property and got soaked in the drizzling rain. A special memory from that day is their little girl, around 5 years of age climbing a tree in her fancy dress. She insisted on being dressed up and then expertly climbed that tree. I thought it was a beautiful testimony of the couple and their loving, free thinking ways.

In September I had the pleasure of marrying Rebecca and Steve at their Halloween themed wedding. It was beautiful and spooky at the same time. Afterwards they told me that I fit right in! I took that as the genuine compliment that they intended it to be!

On Valentine's day this year I was honoured to officiate for a brave and dedicated Military Family. Now I know that I may be a bit biased but this family and the dedication that they demonstrate to each other, their family and our country really tugged at my heart strings. The groom was being sent off on a lengthy training session and then being deployed. They would likely not see each other for at least a year and wanted to make it official before he left. It was a very small and intimate ceremony. There were a lot of tears at the thought of a separation but also many tears of joy at their love. I felt truly blessed to be able to help this couple celebrate their love before their time apart.

The last couple I will tell you about today is Jamie and Martin. They are a beautiful young couple determined to let nothing stand in the way of their love. Nothing, including Covid 19! On May 1st, I performed my first social distancing wedding. The only people in attendance were the couple, their two witnesses and me. We even were able to pull off a Handfasting. We had to change it a bit so that the witnesses did the tying of the rope. That is what the Bride wanted and so we made it happen. It was a cool and rainy day as we stood, socially distanced from each other in a gazebo in New Maryland. We followed all the rules and yet still managed to pull off a lovely wedding ceremony in the middle of a pandemic. Definitely a love story to be remembered. Yay true love!

Each and every wedding has been a wonderful experience. Each couple was unique as was their ceremony. To be able to help couples celebrate their love in a way that is authentic to them is leaves me filled with joy. A privilege and an honour indeed!

I am pleased to say that I have had an incredible year as Lay Chaplain. The love and encouragement that I have felt from all of you has made it better than I EVER could have imagined. Many of you were directly involved in either making it happen or supporting me along the way. Sheila and Tony as active Lay Chaplain committee chairs, committee members Joan and Gail and my co Lay Chaplain, the incredible Deby, this wonderful fellowship, and of course my beautiful family, I have felt your support all along the way. Each opportunity I am given to officiate

or represent as the Lay Chaplain grows my heart and soul in a way I am at a loss to explain.

Thank you from the bottom of my ever-expanding heart for trusting me with this incredible opportunity. I am eternally grateful. Namaste.



Born A Crime

by Trevor Noah

Many of you probably know the author as a comedian and show host who recently gave large amounts of money to pay studio staff no longer needed as he works from home during the Covid crisis.

His present position makes his account of early life dealing with poverty, apartheid and the racial tensions that followed it very moving, giving us new understanding of another's world. His mother chose to have a child by a white man she liked and respected but did not intend to live with. As intercourse between black and white was illegal, this made Noah "Born A Crime". His mother was a devout Christian who took him to three churches of different racial background every Sunday. She was also determined she and Noah would reach comfortable levels of income and education. Part of her plan was to move to areas reflecting this ambition and subsequently of different racial composition. Even after the appalling segregation laws of apartheid were removed black, white and coloured (meaning part white part black) people remained separated.

As a coloured boy with an ambitious mother, Noah did not fit into any societal group easily. Note that Barack Obama does not identify himself as coloured and there does not seem to have been a coloured society in South Africa. He was able to get a good education, thanks to his mother's persistence and his own abilities, but this did not overcome the problems of poverty and exclusion. Perhaps it made them seem worse as he was smart enough to see ways of making money and driven to make decisions on how far this justified pushing the bounds of morality. The situation became worse for him and his mother when she took a new husband who became abusive. The conclusion is dramatic

So the major interest is how he achieved the confidence and successes to reach his current position. Some of the

answers are clear: music, ingenuity, humour, courage, education and the continuing support of his remarkable mother. The importance of religion is less clear. He never mentions his views. Is there still something he feels he has to hide behind the humour, word skill and generosity?

Let me know if you would like to borrow my copy.

Sheila Andrew



Storytelling for a Cause

Hamilton Unitarians host "storytelling for a cause" event with 13 true-life tales

Celebrated authors [Gary Barwin](#), [Alison Wearing](#), [Dorothy Palmer](#) and [Jamie Tennant](#) will be among the 13 presenters who will share their true-life tales on the theme of "Leaving Home/Coming Home" during a special Zoom storytelling fundraising event organized by The First Unitarian Church of Hamilton on Saturday, June 20 at 7:30 p.m.

They will be part of the popular 6-Minute Memoir "speed storytelling for a cause" series, which challenges presenters to tell a compelling tale in six minutes or less.

This fundraiser will benefit the work of the church as well as [Empowerment Squared](#), which creates programs to assist newcomers and marginalized youth and communities.

Tickets are \$10. Reserve yours at:

<https://tinyurl.com/ycnr9bvf>

Several members of the church will also present their stories and the event will be hosted by church member [Anne Bokma](#), a journalist and author of the new memoir, *My Year of Living Spiritually: One Woman's Secular Quest for a More Soulful Life*.

Now in its 8th year, the 6-Minute Memoir is a popular storytelling event that's held annually at the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton. It has raised more than \$40,000 for local charities. Last year more than 250 people attended the event and many had to be turned away at the door. Now, thanks to Zoom, there's room for everyone!

For more information on the 6-Minute Memoir go to:

<https://www.annebokma.com/6minute-memoir>

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