



The Newsletter of the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton

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 October 2020

Up-coming Sunday Services .....	1
Notes from the President .....	1
Board Meetings 2020-21 .....	2
TUFF Caring Circle .....	2
Ikigai: Raison d’Etre .....	2
All In For Climate Justice: People, Power, Planet .....	3
Another National Sunday service coming up .....	3
CUUWA events .....	4
Food For Thought .....	4
Our Earth As a Village – Neat Numbers .....	5
The Power of Now .....	5



## Up-coming Sunday Services

We will continue to provide Sunday Services by ZOOM each Sunday. Some very interesting services are planned—so watch for the ZOOM information each week. If you have suggestions for future speakers please let Haifa Miller or Sheila Moore know. Sunday Services from October 4<sup>th</sup> to Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> inclusive are as follows:

### October 4 Ben Hong

What do we need to become our best selves? Who can help and what can go wrong? How do we make it right? Come and listen to one person’s story on becoming an adult in Canada.

*Service Leader:* Linda Sprague

**October 11** Tony Fitzgerald - “*Thanksgiving: Food Based Volunteer Opportunities*” In addition to volunteer work which Tony Fitzgerald does around the Fellowship, he has a regular shift at the Fredericton Community Kitchens and is a regular and substitute driver for Meals on Wheels of Fredericton and a board member of that organization. He will speak on how and why he came to be doing these things and why he thinks he gets back far more than he gives. See the article *Ikigai* in this newsletter for a service promo.

**October 18** Roche Sappier - “*The Culture and the Concerns of Aboriginal Peoples*” This Sunday Service will take place at the Fellowship. We also plan to record it on zoom for those who cannot attend in person. There

will be registration of attendees for safety protocol reasons. More details just before this trial-run, in-house presentation. We thank Roche Sappier for accepting our invitation.

*Service Leader:* Haifa Miller

**October 25** A representative from Black Lives Matter Fredericton will be speaking. Please see the article “*All In For Climate Justice: People, Power, Planet*” in this newsletter for more information.

*Service Leader:* Jane Loughborough

**November 1** Andrew Cutler - “*Aristotle on Friendship and Wonder*” 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.

*Service Leader:* Heather Lunergan



## Notes from the President

Sept. 22, 2020

I am still reflecting on the wonderful outdoor service organized by our Sunday Services co-chairs, Haifa Miller and Sheila Moore. On Sunday, September 6, we met at 874 York Street, in a large circle on the grass of the lower field. A fire-pit was placed in the centre of the circle, stacked with firewood and crumpled newsprint, awaiting ignition.

Among the thirty plus people in attendance on this blue-sky day were many long-time members of the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton, along with guests and newer members. People brought poetry, quotations and memories to share.

As the fire was lit, so also was re-kindled my appreciation of the restorative power of being in community. As we were held in the beauty of the morning, so also were we held in the grace of our caring. Our gathering together recalled to me the sense of connection I have felt during our Sunday Services in the sanctuary of our building.

It is indeed a fact that various members of the Fellowship have contributed mightily, in many ways, to keep our community strong during the pandemic. However, bits

and bytes cannot hope to provide the experiential glow of a thoughtful presentation, followed by bits and bites in the kitchen.

Decima



## Board Meetings 2020-21

Upcoming 2020-2021 UFF Board Meetings will be held on Sundays, starting at 1:00 PM. January, February and March meetings will be conducted via Zoom. All other meetings will take place in the board room on the second floor of the UFF building. Members of the congregation are invited to attend the meetings.

Sunday, October 18, at 1 PM  
Sunday, November 15 at 1 PM  
Sunday, December 6 at 1 PM  
Sunday January 3 at 1 PM  
Sunday, February 21 at 1 PM  
Sunday, March 21 at 1 PM  
Sunday, April 18 at 1 PM  
Sunday, May 16 at 1 PM  
Sunday, June 6 at 1 PM



## TUFF Caring Circle

### Joys and Concerns

Thinking about Sheila Moore and wishing her a quick recovery from knee surgery.

We could still use some more members for the Tuff Caring Circle. We try to help people with their concerns and celebrate their joys. We often deliver food, but we are not doing food during the pandemic. We send cards and visit when appropriate and keep in touch with phone calls. If you would like to receive “caring” calls, if you would rather not be on the committee but could offer help when needed, we appreciate your contributions as well. Please contact Janet at [janetcra@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:janetcra@nbnet.nb.ca)

We have a private Facebook page to try to keep some community during these difficult times.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/247416469728195/>

Let me know and I can add you to the page.

We also host Tea and Conversation by zoom on Mondays at 2 pm. Let me know if you would like to be added to our list or watch for an announcement.

For more information or to send a joy or concern, please contact Janet at [janetcra@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:janetcra@nbnet.nb.ca).



## Ikigai (生き甲斐): Raison d’Etre

Yes, I know... what kind of a tweet uses a foreign language expression to explain a different foreign language expression? So... sue me. For me, it works.

The first verse of the sixth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament is part of the “*Sermon on the Mount*”. According to the King James version, it is rendered as:

*Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.*

The Japanese have an expression (phonetically), ikigai. From Wikipedia the etymology is given as:

The word consists of ‘iki’ (to live) and ‘gai’ (reason). The term ikigai compounds two Japanese words: iki (生き) meaning “life; alive” and kai (甲斐) meaning “(an) effect; (a) result; (a) fruit; (a) worth; (a) use; (a) benefit; (no, little) avail” (sequentially voiced as gai) to arrive at “a reason for living [being alive]; a meaning for [to] life; what [something that] makes life worth living; a raison d’etre”.

The July 25th issue of Radio National (Australia)’s “All in the Mind” series entitled “*Kindness, and Longevity*” has the following comment:

But I did meet quite a few centenarians in Japan when I was travelling there for research, and one of the very common themes there, one that actually scientists agree on as well, is that a very important thing is to have a purpose in life or what the Japanese call Ikigai or the reason for living, and they consider it so important to health that even the Health Ministry of Japan recognises Ikigai as one of the most important health drivers. Just like they tell people not to smoke, they tell people to exercise, they also tell people to find their Ikigai for the purpose in life. And this is the thing that really shows up in Japan a lot, and there is research confirming that indeed having purpose in life is a very important thing for your health and your longevity.

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/allinthemind/kindness-and-longevity/12477978>

I had volunteered to do the October 11<sup>th</sup> service with the topic being, sort of, volunteering. In brainstorming ideas for the Fall, the committee members thought that Thanksgiving might be a good time to do a service about the Fredericton Community Kitchens or Meals on Wheels of Fredericton. We had the executive director of Meals on Wheels in to speak when the organization was getting its own kitchen into operation to complement the partnerships they have with the Doctor Everett Chalmers Hospital and with York Care Centre and that wasn’t that long ago. We had the executive director of the Community Kitchens in to speak when that organization was opening “Kim’s

Kitchen” on the Leo Hayes High School campus to support the Student Hunger Programme and while that was somewhat longer ago, the Kitchens have a new executive director and with CoViD, the Kitchens suspended volunteer help from mid-March to mid-June and I have not had a chance to really meet the new director. So I agreed to volunteer to speak on volunteering with specific references to Meals on Wheels of Fredericton and the Fredericton Community Kitchens.

Always, the problem of how to approach a topic and what, exactly, to say. I was listening to the Radio National podcast for the *Kindness and Longevity* program and when they mentioned and explained *ikigai* something in my mind said “Eureka!” Join us on October 11<sup>th</sup> in our ZOOM service to see what sort of mess I can make of this.

Tony Fitzgerald



## All In For Climate Justice: People, Power, Planet

Sunday October 25th, 2020 UFF

In 2020 the United Nations is celebrating its 75th anniversary: October 25th is UN Sunday for UFF. The UN theme this year, “ALL IN FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE: PEOPLE, POWER, PLANET” is enormous: during our UN Sunday service we will focus on the PEOPLE part. UFF will make, on October 25th, a significant gesture toward climate crisis from the perspective of politics, social justice and human rights. Specifically, we will address human rights and social justice as experienced by those involved in Black Lives Matter (BLM) Fredericton. A person directly involved in BLM Fredericton will speak with us during the service.

The term “climate justice” invites us to consider the climate crisis not only as a simple scientific, physical phenomenon, but also as a justice issue because of the possibilities to organize and respond to climate crisis in a way that prioritizes the needs of those people and communities that are most vulnerable. Rather than examining the scientific causes, impacts and solutions, this year’s UN Sunday theme invites us to explore the human causes, impacts and solutions. We all know that climate crisis is the most significant existential threat to our planet and all its inhabitants. What we don’t talk about as often is how that destruction plays out in real life. When we talk about acting for climate justice, we must prioritize the needs and leadership of all communities - including - indigenous, Black, immigrant, people with disabilities, LGBTQI and especially trans and non-binary people, youth, those who are experiencing poverty and/or homelessness, those who live in crowded, coastal and/or low lying areas.

To focus our attention as a UFF congregation on the PEOPLE part of Climate Justice, a rep from Black Lives Matter Fredericton will join us on October 25th to give

an update on recent past and current activities as well as the goals of the organization. Perhaps you took part in the BLM demonstrations in the spring. Perhaps you are already involved in a social justice group endeavour, and/or perhaps every day you participate, in a small or large way, in climate justice.

How do you experience climate justice? How do you live climate justice? What have you done to lessen your negative impact on the climate? What have you done to assist others in knowing and living climate justice? What might the UFF do to lessen the burdens of climate injustice on others?

Justice, equity and compassion in human relations is a UU Principle. Climate justice for people requires careful thought, informed ideas and courageous action. October 25th is an opportunity for UFF to move on this Principle: individually and as a group.

Jane Loughborough



## Another National Sunday service coming up

As this pandemic drags on and on the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) continues to look for ways to help Unitarians and Universalists stay connected in spirit and in community.

The virtual experiences may not be to everyone’s liking, but for now it is a safe way to continue to experience our religious community and we have to be grateful for that.

Following on the heels of the highly successful national Sunday service held in May, and which attracted over 1,000 participants from across Canada and beyond, the CUC is organizing another nation-wide Sunday service. It will be held on **Nov. 15**, and the theme will be “Sustaining our Light”, an appropriate theme in keeping with the challenge we all are faced with keeping our own lights shining these days.

This event will be held in conjunction with an online version of a national fall gathering with regional fall gatherings rolled into the same weekend, Nov. 13 to 15.

The weekend kicks off with shorter versions of the regional gatherings on the Friday night, followed on Saturday with an interesting mix of workshops and presentations. One highlight is the council’s social justice team workshops on racism awareness and strategies to deal with it.

There will also be a discussion with the CUC board about the future of our religious and spiritual movement.

It won’t be all work. On Saturday night there will be a coffeehouse with music and storytelling.

To find out more details about the fall gathering check out

the enews newsletter at [cuc.ca/enews](http://cuc.ca/enews)

## Conference 2021

CUC staff and the organizers of the biannual May conference that had been scheduled for Halifax this year and had to be cancelled because of the pandemic, have decided the conference will be held in May 2021 and will be held on line. Even though the Covid 19 pandemic may have ended by next year all the planning and organizing that goes on to put on this large conference made it necessary to make an early decision whether to do it in person or virtual.

## Other on line Opportunities

If you are looking for an opportunity to explore your own spirituality in greater depth you might like to check out the program Connect and Deepen. This is similar to a small group ministry but offered on line.

The sessions happen every second and fourth Sundays at 5 pm AT. The contacts are Rev. Linda Thomson, congregational life lead for Central and Eastern regions and Joan Carolyn, congregational life lead for BC and western Canada.

For more information and a schedule visit [cuc.ca/events/connect-and-deepen](http://cuc.ca/events/connect-and-deepen).

By Glenna Hanley  
CUC board member and UFF liaison with CUC



## CUUWA events

The Canadian U\*U Women's Association invites you to take part in our upcoming activities.

Please check out our website ([cuuwa.org](http://cuuwa.org)) or our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/CANUUWA>) for more information, or write to me at [eldergomes@yahoo.com](mailto:eldergomes@yahoo.com) to get the Zoom links.

1. Call for submissions for a creative project, *Sacred Shelter*. In the summer phase, extending until September 21, Canadian UU women and queer writers, poets, and artists are invited to submit short pieces of writing or art. Then, in the fall phase, participants will respond to one of the pieces of writing or art submitted in the summer. This project is part of the "Sacred Space" theme of our March 2021 International Women's Day Worship and Study events.

<https://cuuwa.org/2020/09/07/sacred-shelter/>

2. **The Canadian U\*U Feminist Book Club** is a low-stress, low-maintenance, open, intentionally queer-positive and intersectional, feminist-in-its-broadest definition book-and-other-media and chat club. We explore books by feminists and about feminism and, perhaps even more importantly, share our experiences as feminists. You are free to join us whenever you can, whether or not you

have read the book selection, whether you want to share or listen. We meet for an hour each month, usually on the second Sunday of the month, at 8 pm Atlantic time. On October 18 (note change of date) we will be discussing Robyn Maynard's *Policing Black Lives*.

<https://cuuwa.org/2020/09/07/canadian-uu-feminist-book-and-other-media-club/>

3. The CUUWA will be offering a free online program of **Cakes for the Queen of Heaven**, starting on **Saturday, November 7 at 4 pm** Eastern time, and meeting every three to four weeks for eleven sessions. *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven* is a woman honouring adult RE curriculum by Rev. Shirley Ranck. It examines pre-Judaean Christian cultures that may have worshipped the female as divine. The concepts of equality and reverence for the female in a religious setting are eye-opening to many participants. If you are interested in joining us and able to make a covenantal commitment to our group, please email me at [eldergomes@yahoo.com](mailto:eldergomes@yahoo.com) with "Cakes" in the subject line and any questions you have. I will send participants the Zoom link and other details on November 3, so please register by that time.

<https://cuuwa.org/2020/09/07/cakes-for-the-queen-of-heaven/>

Please support our activities and help us work for change by becoming a member of the CUUWA: <https://cuuwa.org/contact-us/become-a-member/>

More information:

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes  
Chair  
at [eldergomes@yahoo.com](mailto:eldergomes@yahoo.com)



## Food For Thought

I read the article in April's The Touchstone by Lynn Unger titled Pandemic. I found her comparison to this period of lockdown and quarantine to the God-instilled Sabbath very apt. However, I think we can take this line of thought further and make our lives even more peaceful; with a healthier environment, less animal suffering and a significantly reduced risk of future pandemic illnesses to boot.

What is the root cause of most of our pandemics (both historical and emerging)? According to the CDC it is zoonotic illnesses, most of which are created from our (ab)use of animals. The CDC released a study stating that 75+% of emerging pandemics are zoonotic and more than 60% of historical pandemics could be traced directly to animal sources. [I suspect these figures may even be conservative based on my own research into the origins of pandemic illnesses.] COVID-19 is thought to have originated in live animal trade markets (wet markets) for animal flesh consumption. Swine flu, avian flu, poxes, plagues, etc. can all be traced to animal origins – in all these cases animal

agriculture for the consumption of animal flesh. The next pandemic illnesses are already forming in farms around the world.

We treat animals so dismally the theologian William Ralph Inge aptly put it, “We have enslaved the rest of the animal creation, and have treated our distant cousins in fur and feathers so badly that beyond doubt, if they were able to formulate a religion, they would depict the Devil in human form.” We enclose animals in spaces so small they are literally breeding grounds for diseases. In some cases, these diseases spread to humans. This led me to ask why does this occur?

During the lockdown I have had a lot of time to reflect upon possible answers to this question. The Bible is often said to be full of allegory and I think Numbers 11 (and the corresponding passages of Psalms 78 and 106 and Paul’s mention of this event in 1 Corinthians 10) is very apt for the situation we are experiencing. If you read these accounts, God had provided all the food the Israelites needed for their testing in the desert. Instead of being satisfied with this, they are said to have “lusted” to eat animal flesh. God reluctantly gave into their demands; but punished them for it by bringing a plague upon those who ate the flesh. God is said to punish evil. If, as Reverend Inge posits, we are literally devilish to animals, will God not punish this treatment?

Humans have no physiological need to consume flesh. This is confirmed whether you take evolution as your basis or most religious origin beliefs<sup>1</sup>. This superfluous lust seems to have a host of negative consequences. The focus of my meditations during our COVID times is pandemic creation. Whether you view these zoonotic diseases as karma, divine retribution or some sort of biological feedback, there comes a time when we cannot ignore the consequences of our collective actions. If we want to dramatically reduce the risk of the next pandemic even starting, we should leave animal flesh off our plates. This would have several other benefits too. It would reduce the risk of some of our other greatest lifestyle health problems (i.e. cardiovascular diseases, many types of cancers, many neurodegenerative diseases, etc.). It would mean less land, water and greenhouse gas emissions used to produce our food. This, in turn, could help reduce global hunger issues by making more food available. The workers who work in slaughterhouses are also some of the most exploited workers out there. I doubt many people wake up one day and say, “I love working butchering countless animals every day,” or, “This is my dream job.” This is literally soul destroying work many people pay someone else to do.

If we want to live in the peace God promises us in Isaiah (or in any number of other sacred texts) – where the wolf will lay down with the lamb and all will live peacefully together – we need to do something first. Most people do not realize that Isaiah’s prophecy fulfillment hinges on us committing ourselves to peace, justice and mercy for all of

creatures of the world. During this time of reflection, and as society gets back to “normal”, we should reflect upon our actions. Perhaps starting with the simple question: ‘When I eat do I do so mercifully and peacefully?’

Chris Grant

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Milton Mills has a great resource combining his Christian faith and evolution showing our anatomy to be that of an herbivore:

<https://drmiltonmillsplantbasednation.com/the-comparative-anatomy-of-eating/>



## Our Earth As a Village – Neat Numbers

(taken from Sept. issue of “Freddy”)

If we could shrink the Earth’s population to a village of precisely 100 people with all existing human ratios remaining the same, it would look like this:

There would be 60 Asians, 11 Europeans, 14 from the Western Hemisphere (North and South), and 15 Africans

50 would be female and 50 would be male.

70 would be non-white; 30 would be white.

70 would be non-Christian; 30 Christian.

50% of the entire village’s wealth would be in the hands of only 6 people and all 6 would be citizens of the United States.

Only 5 would have English as their native language.

80 would live in substandard housing.

17 would be unable to read.

16 would suffer from malnutrition.

13 would have no clean, safe water to drink.

1 would be near death, 1 would be a newborn.

Only 7 would have a college education.

22 people would own or share a computer.

When one considers our world from such an incredibly compressed perspective, the need for both tolerance and understanding becomes apparent.



## The Power of Now

Eckhart Tolle

This book is a very useful guide to getting away from the mind, ego and unconscious actions. We are to be the observer that watches the mind from consciousness, deep

presence in the Now and the Being that is. Some of his verbal illustrations of this state come from Buddhist and Christian teaching, including the concept of Christ as our divine presence. However these beliefs are not essential to using the concepts.

Tolle's ideas are not always easy to understand but the format of the book helps: sections are short, with symbols showing when Tolle thinks we should stop to contemplate or use the material. Questions a reader might ask are used before following sections, with answers provided.

To get into the Now and the Being, he suggests various portals to the Unmanifested. These include moving from the mind into the sense of silence or space, moving into the body to experience one with all creation or simply wondering for as long as possible what the next thought might be. This did not mean hiding from everything. Eventually he describes the Unmanifested as the divine presence of God but it can be interpreted as love. He claims consciousness replaces unconscious actions once the Now and Being are found. Death and birth are the hinges of life and also portals. We can even practise death as a way of finding the eternal Now.

The world of form is fleeting, but the world of the formless is eternal. Consider the last line of the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi: "It is in dying we are born to eternal life." This is also how by living authentically and not prioritizing materialism but instead believing in inner being we are better prepared for life, as well as, eternity.

So achieving this state helps us to improve life for ourselves and others. We can realise that there is only the Now. Past is gone and future is not yet existing. The pain of difficult relationships or of noise or frustration can be made to pass through a transparent consciousness. It is all right to say "No" but this must be done without negative feelings. Love can be found as the positive opposite of the negative.

There is no clear suggestion of how this helps us deal with physical pain. Tolle even suggests that the discomforts of giving birth, menstruation and the experiences of its ending help women achieve the Now more often than men. But the methods of dealing with mental pain could be applied to the physical. As I heard a doctor at the hospital say to a patient receiving test results "It is neither good or bad. It just is." This is Acceptance and Surrender that is part of dealing with any pain.

The states of mind he recommends can help us make actions that will improve the world he says, but his answer to world problems is that all should achieve the union with Now, Being, Consciousness and the Unmanifested.

As Tolle says, this book requires time to digest and use. Questions probably remain for many of us readers but it is certainly valuable and my efforts to introduce it leave a lot left for the reader to explore.

Sheila Andrew and Haifa Miller, who has a copy that readers are welcome to borrow.

This space wants your material!  
Please send articles to [touchstone@uff.ca](mailto:touchstone@uff.ca)