



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 December 2020

Up-coming Sunday Services .....	1
Shreddies Gingerbread Snack Mix .....	2
Keeping the Faith: A Personal Response .....	2
Books Sunday .....	2
TUFF Caring Circle .....	2
Black Lives Matter Fredericton .....	3
Shirley Chisholm .....	3
What is the CUSJ? .....	3
The Yule .....	4
Fall Canvass Report .....	4
Song of Rita Joe .....	5



## Up-coming Sunday Services

We will continue to provide Sunday Services by ZOOM each Sunday. Watch for the ZOOM information each week which will be sent to the congregational email list. Contact the chair of the membership committee, [Membership@UFF.ca](mailto:Membership@UFF.ca), to be added to the mailing list.

**November 29<sup>th</sup>** Joan McFarland - *“My Struggle against the Privatization of Nursing Homes in New Brunswick”*  
Service Leader: Haifa Miller

**December 6<sup>th</sup>** Albert Banerjee and Lyne Oulette will explore the issue of social isolation among older adults. What causes isolation? How do people cope? They are hoping that this presentation will spark conversation about what might be done locally to address social isolation – a challenge that preceded COVID and has been exacerbated by it.

Albert Banerjee is Research Chair in Community Health and Aging and Lyne Oulette is a former physiotherapist and is currently completing a Masters of Applied Health Services Research degree at UNB.  
Service Leader: Sheila Moore

**December 13<sup>th</sup>** Jane Loughborough - *“Advent III”* Advent is a season of the liturgical year observed as a time of waiting in preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Christ at Christmas. The third Sunday in Advent, Gaudete Sunday, features the colour rose, a sign of JOY.

In our virtual Advent service we will look for, find and celebrate JOY through reflection, words and music.

**December 20<sup>th</sup>** Janet Crawford - *“Blue Christmas”*

This service will be interactive and will give people a chance to reflect on past Christmases and talk about how they feel as Christmas approaches this year. Christmas isn't always joyful for everyone and this one may be difficult as we are separated from loved ones.

**December 27<sup>th</sup> and January 3<sup>rd</sup>** No Service

**January 10<sup>th</sup>** Tom Beckley will be speaking about the Spirituality of the Forests. Dr. Tom Beckley has been working in the field of natural resource sociology in Canada since 1993. He is a professor in Forestry and Environmental Management and a Board member with the Nature Trust of NB.

**January 17<sup>th</sup>** Jane Fritz - *“The Himalayan Buddhist kingdom of Bhutan, where Gross National Happiness reigns”* Jigme Singye Wangchuck, Bhutan's 4<sup>th</sup> king (father of today's king), took a defining step in the development of his isolated 3<sup>rd</sup> world country when he declared, early in his reign that began in 1972 that, “Gross national happiness (GNH) is more important than gross domestic product.” This, of course, reflects the Buddhist principles of compassion and contentment. GNH is seen as part of the Buddhist Middle Path, where “happiness is accrued from a balanced act rather than from an extreme approach.” In 2011 the UN encouraged the countries of the world to look to Bhutan's example, calling happiness and well-being fundamental human goals. Following that, the UN began producing an annual World Happiness Report based on the Bhutan model and declared March 20 to be celebrated annually as International Day of Happiness.

In this talk Jane Fritz will discuss Bhutan's approach to measuring and supporting the happiness and well-being of their citizens, as well as some of their very special challenges in moving to a modern society and modern economy while living in an isolated part of the world between two giants: India and China. Jane was fortunate enough to have traveled to Bhutan 3 times while helping that country establish a healthy computer science program. In addition, she taught a number of Bhutanese students who returned to be part of the emerging Bhutanese IT programs and workforce. She is a huge fan of Bhutan

and their efforts to follow their own path.  
*Service Leader: Linda Sprague*



## Shreddies Gingerbread Snack Mix

The Christmas Season this year will probably be unlike those of the past. However, some traditions must be observed! Like special home-made treats for family. The following is one of our favourites.

### Ingredients:

- 4 cups Post Shreddies Cereal
- 1 cup each pecan pieces and slivered almonds
- 2 cups mini pretzels
- 1 cup green pumpkin seeds
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup butter – melted
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup packed brown sugar
- 1 tbsp each ground ginger and cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp salt
- Pinch of ground cloves
- 1 cup dried cranberries or raisins
- 1 cup white chocolate chips

### Procedure:

1. Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Arrange pecans and almonds in a layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake for 15 minutes or until golden and fragrant. Cool slightly.
2. Combine the nuts with the Shreddies, pretzels and pumpkin seeds in a large bowl. Stir the melted butter with the sugar, ginger, cinnamon, salt and cloves until combined; drizzle over the cereal mixture. Toss thoroughly.
3. Spread mixture on two large rimmed baking sheets. Bake, rotating pans once, for 10 to 12 minutes or until crisp and fragrant; cool completely. Stir in the cranberries and white chips. Transfer to an airtight container. Reserve at room temperature for up to 1 week – or until eaten! Makes 12 cups.

Thanks to Sheila Moore



## Keeping the Faith: A Personal Response

Were you wondering what's happening in town besides Covid19? Meet indigenous activist Bev Perley, busily keeping a sacred fire alive in Officer's Square. Her camper sits amidst the destruction of what remains of that once-shady site, now minus several trees and the old stone fence. In the rubble lie the disturbed artifacts of the First Nation's people who were Bev Perley's ancestors. Her claim, that the city did not responsibly consult with natives,

who hold the treaty rights to the land, was met with a patronizing, "we'll take your concerns into account." To Perley, one of the grandmothers who halted the Sisson Mines' project, it felt like a pat on the head, followed by business as usual.

It's a concern for us all, this devastation of yet another green space. All of us are connected to this ground. All of us are responsible for respecting sacred burial sites. Unfortunately, respect for the ancestors is not included in our cultural practices and ceremonies. "Progress", represented by a skating rink and stage, has taken precedence over what should be an instinct to preserve. Instead, we become enablers in the global frenzy of destruction.

Whether indigenous protectors (not protesters, as they have been misnamed in the press) can save this once tranquil space is yet to be seen. If they do, it will be one small step towards protecting the earth, honouring our past, and dignifying our city. Bev Perley deserves our support and gratitude for keeping the faith.

Lorna Drew



## Books Sunday

### Sunday Service Cttee

The Sunday Service Committee would like to invite you to share a book that has changed your life. We want to create a special book list of recommended books that have transformed our lives. If you have read a book that you feel everyone should hear about, email Sheila Andrew. You may remember that she does book reviews for Touchstone. Sheila will review your emails and choose four or five books. We would like those four or five people who suggested the books to share their books together for one Sunday morning service. We all could use a pick-me-up in the middle of winter. Please send the titles and author and a paragraph about the book you want to recommend to Sheila Andrew at email: [sandrew@stu.ca](mailto:sandrew@stu.ca).



## TUFF Caring Circle

### Joys and Concerns

Sending warm wishes to Geneviève Laloux who is recovering from a fall And to Betty Ponder who will be missing her dog, Rockett who went to live with Betty's daughter And to Amber Lynn Elliot who is recovering from surgery. Good luck to Anne-Louise and Betsy who have moved to Nova Scotia Congratulations to Nancy Beltrandi on her move to a new apartment

NEEDED: 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, please contact Janet at [janetcra@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:janetcra@nbnet.nb.ca) or 454-0441.

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 Tuesdays at 1:30 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)



## Black Lives Matter Fredericton Updates: a website and a book

Go to [blmfredericton.ca](http://blmfredericton.ca) to see the newly established Black Lives Matter Fredericton website. The headline is “We can create a world where everyone feels safe and empowered”. This website includes sections on: About Us, Demands, Defund The Police, Resources, Request Speaker and Contact. You can sign up for a Newsletter Subscription and Donate to BLM Fredericton at [blmfredericton.ca](http://blmfredericton.ca) as well.



The Blacks in New Brunswick was written about 50 years ago and is currently out of print: but not for long. A UNB student, who recently started on a path of self-discovery, found an original copy of The Blacks in New Brunswick on his mother’s bookshelf in Woodstock, where he was one of two Black people in the elementary school. This year’s BLM protests helped the student decide to find out more about this important book and to subsequently connect with the realization that he is a seventh-generation African-Canadian. He discovered the book was written by the late William Spray, a former history prof at St Thomas University, who died in 2017. Now, this student, who wants to bring forward the history of his people in NB, and BLM Fredericton are engaged in a project partnered with STU to re-publish Spray’s work. They plan to release the new volume in January 2021, just before Black History Month (February). Publishing this book is also part of an effort by BLMFredericton to bring more Black history sources to teachers in the province. The full article about The Blacks in New Brunswick and the re-publishing project can be found in The Aquinian, St Thomas University’s newspaper: [theaquinian.net](http://theaquinian.net).

Jane Loughborough



## Shirley Chisholm

*“If they don’t give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair”*

November 30<sup>th</sup> is the anniversary of the birth of Shirley Anita Chisholm (née St.Hill). She was an American politician, educator, and author. In 1968, she became the first Black woman elected to the United States congress. In the 1972 presidential election, she became simultaneously, the first African-American candidate for a major party’s nomination for president of the U.S. and the first woman to run for the Democratic Party’s presidential nomination. She didn’t win, but she made a significant mark, and, arguably, paved a road which has led to a woman of mixed African American and Asian American heritage, Kamala Harris, becoming vice-president elect of the U.S.



I must admit that during the Spring and early Summer of 1972 when Chisholm was running to be a candidate for president, my attentions were elsewhere, an ultimately futile attempt to complete the experimental research for a masters thesis in meteorology at the UofT. It was earlier this month while listening to a podcast (BBC’s “*The History Hour*”, the November 2<sup>nd</sup> episode: “*US presidential history special*”) that I first heard about this remarkable woman. There, I’ve given you enough information to learn for yourself if, as I, you were ignorant of this bit of history from our neighbour to the South. Wikipedia and the BBC podcast library at your service. Enjoy!

*“Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this earth.”*

in Fellowship  
Tony Fitzgerald



## What is the CUSJ?

Board members recently directed our treasurer, Suzanne Lanery, to send a cheque for \$50.00 to the Canadian Unitarians For Social Justice (CUSJ). Some people may ask what is the CUSJ and why are we sending them a donation. I was aware that two or three times a year the Fredericton Unitarian Fellowship receives 5 – 10 copies of the CUSJ newsletter, JUSTnews. But since I knew little else, I decided to take time to educate myself and then share with you some information about this important organization. The information that follows comes from the CUSJ website and I admit to plagiarizing some of it.

Canadian UUs often think of themselves as being people who fight for social justice. Norman McLeod, a founding

member of CUSJ, would say that while UU's enthusiasm for social justice causes has a solid underlying base, the enthusiasm seems to ebb and flow with the times. He goes on to say that during the 1950s, '60s and '70s social action was strong in denominations, but in 1996 when CUSJ was formed, it seemed to many that UU denominations were in an ebbing mode when it came to social justice.

On the website you can read more about what Mr. MacLeod says about what was happening in Ontario at the time with the governments "Common Sense Revolution" that spurred the faith communities, including Unitarians Universalist, to action. "Canadian Unitarians For Social Justice (CUSJ) was formed in 1996 when about 70 members of five Unitarian Universalist Congregations and Fellowships of Greater Toronto met to discuss their concern with government cuts to social services. The founding group, of about 35 members, felt that more must be done by Unitarians within their churches and the greater community to protect the social programs that define Canada as a civilized and compassionate nation."

The original committee members wanted CUSJ to develop as a national organisation rather than a Toronto or Ontario one. To do this they decided they needed a newsletter that could reflect thoughts and opinions from across the country. Mel Johnston of Toronto First Unitarian Church was the person who set to work producing the first newsletter that is now a professional publication the organization can be proud of. The history of how what started in the Toronto area became a countrywide organisation can be found on the website. From its modest beginning, the CUSJ has grown into a national organization with membership coast to coast. The CUSJ membership now numbers approximately 350 (in 306 households) representing 44 Congregations and Fellowships."

Today CUSJ works through its national board to correct injustice. They lobby government officials and others in positions of power to stop injustices, they publish the newsletter, JUSTnews, which promotes justice-related issues, and they work with other organizations that share the same vision for social justice causes both in Canada and abroad.

CUSJ values its connections with Unitarian congregations. Because they are not a charity they can speak freely and address some of the more controversial issues of our day.

For more information go to their website <https://www.cusj.org> or their Facebook site:

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

Submitted by Joan Brewer  
Board member



## The Yule

This year, the winter solstice will take place at 6:02am AST on Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup>. Solstice derives from the Latin *sōlstitium*, which comes from the parts *sōl*, "sun," and *sistere*, "to stand still," i.e. "the standing still of the sun." Marking this event was so significant to our ancestors that great effort was made to build monuments that could be used to determine the day of the solstice. Perhaps the most famous is Stonehenge, but there are a number of passage tombs in Ireland such as the Newgrange in County Meath. Simpler stone circles across Northern Europe as well as in the Americas and Africa which may have served a similar purpose for tying religious observations to celestial events.



With the coming of the patriarchal religions to Europe, the pagan festivals were appropriated and given Christian interpretations. The festival of the rebirth of the Sun God was taken to observe the birth of the God Son. And, so it goes...

In whatever tradition you choose to celebrate, may the Mother bless your solstice festival.

Tony Fitzgerald



## Fall Canvass Report Hallelujah! We Did It!

**\$15,150**

In the midst of this pandemic nothing is predictable. And certainly we could not have predicted that this year in particular our annual pledge campaign would hit our goal and even exceed it.

As of this writing, with officially three days left in the stewardship/pledge campaign for 2021, Treasurer Suzanne Lanery has informed me that the total of our pledges for this campaign has hit \$15,150. That's \$150 over our goal set at \$15,000.

The usual pledge letter and forms were sent out at the start of November. Half way through the month our campaign was doing well at \$10,000. But we decided to send out one more appeal by email and a final appeal at last Sunday's on line service. In this final week more members responded, pledges came in and by Friday night we hit the goal and the top of our red thermometer. (See the graphic included





here)

It is difficult to find the words to express how grateful and thankful we are to all members and friends who have pledged to support this fellowship so generously. Through your contributions you express a belief in the value of this fellowship. Your gift is a gift to all our members and friends, including those who are unable to pledge at this time.

It is also a gift to yourself, as you benefit from sharing in a faith community that offers all of us a spiritual home and a community that is there for us, in good times and bad.

The impact of your gift spreads beyond our small circle here, to Unitarians and Universalists in all of Canada, in helping to keep this unique religious movement going and growing well into the future.

Thank you all on behalf of myself, Suzanne, our president Decima Mitchell and our board of directors.

Submitted by Glenna Hanley  
VP of Finance and Facilities



## Song of Rita Joe

### Autobiography of a Mi'kmaq Poet

I was hoping to find a positive work on indigenous identity but for the first few sections it was hard to see this. Yes, she began with one of my favourite poems, The Old Woman Dance. There is a word for this in her language and it perfectly describes the pleasure of the slow, low steps and the joy of being a part of a pow wow. She shows things can be shared through her language and experience, adding to understanding for others.

However early life was very difficult for her with a series of foster homes and problems that led her to call the Moun-ties when she was 14yrs old, telling them she was indige-nous and should be in a Residential School. So they gently

took her to the Shubenacadie School where she was afraid of the nuns and priests but glad of the education. She almost always looked for the positive in what she wrote, avoiding “treading on toes.”

When she was sixteen she left the school and took a series of jobs, eventually moving to Boston and there she met other Mik'maq and felt comfortable with them. Fitting into her own culture took time. Her future husband Frank, also Mik'Maq, worked there. They married, moved back to several reserves and places in Atlantic Canada and had many children.

Life was still not easy for Rita as Frank had affairs with other women and sometimes abused Rita. However she makes her way of surviving clearer. She still loves Frank and is finding friends, always making the best of things so their children can get a better world. This world includes education and daughter Phyllis goes to Shubenacadie Res-idential School. Frank goes to work for a degree at UNB and Rita finishes Grade 12. This makes it easier for her to write down the poems she has always been singing in her mind. The poems she shares with us are in English, with some Mik'maq words, often beautifully emphasising the importance of non-indigenous understanding of her world and culture.

The last section is probably of the most value to Unitari-ans as she shares the spiritual values and experiences her culture and the Catholic culture brought her. She has no problem finding the same creator and spirit of love and kindness in both. Shubenacadie Church apparently uses Mik'Maq language for parts of the service. Sweat lodge is particularly important to her for immediate revelations and peace. So yes, there is a chance of greater learning and experience through reading the indigenous viewpoint and a positive book. Rita had books published, won awards and when presented to the Queen politely asked her “How are your grandchildren?”. The somewhat surprised Queen replied “Fine thank you.” and smiled happily.

You are welcome to borrow my copy,

Sheila Andrew

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