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## Contents for December 2021

Up-coming Sunday Services .....	1
Musical Request Service .....	1
Sunday Service December 12 .....	1
An Opportunity for the Technically Inclined .....	2
Joys and Concerns from the Caring Circle .....	2
Summary from the November Board Meeting .....	2
Holiday Wishes .....	3
Eighth Principle passes; now what? .....	3
the Ups and Downs of Adopting an Eighth Principle ...	4
An Update on our Pledge Campaign .....	5
The Father of Christmas .....	6
Further to "What Does It Mean to be a U*U?" .....	6
Inclusion .....	6
Conundrum .....	7
Thomas Francis Hanley .....	8
Ecole Polytechnique Massacre .....	9
Kabul Beauty School .....	9

on)!

Please send requests to [janeloughborough@gmail.com](mailto:janeloughborough@gmail.com)

*Service Leader* – Jane Loughborough

*Tech* – Myron Hedderson

### Dec. 26<sup>th</sup> No service

Enjoy your Boxing Day! See you January 2<sup>nd</sup> and Happy New Year.

### Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> A New Year, A Time of Renewal

*Service Leader* – Janet Crawford

*Tech* – Myron Hedderson

The Sunday Services Committee wishes everyone a peaceful and blessed Holiday Season.

Haifa Miller, Sheila Moore, Tony Fitzgerald, Jane Loughborough, Ken Moore, Myron Hedderson and Kurtis Langevin



## Musical Request Service

The Sunday December 19<sup>th</sup> service at UFF is going to feature Advent, Christmas and Yule music. What are your favourite Christmas carols to sing at a Sunday service? Do you have a favourite piece of choral music for Advent or Christmas that you would like to hear? Are you familiar with Benjamin Britten's Ceremony of Carols?

We won't be singing choruses from Handel's MESSIAH but we will be singing (with masks on) with piano accompaniment, listening to CD's and perhaps using DVD's to bring you special Advent/Christmas music. Tell us about your favourite Advent or Christmas season music so we can include it on December 19<sup>th</sup>.

Send your requests to [janeloughborough@gmail.com](mailto:janeloughborough@gmail.com) or leave a message for Jane at 506-459-0913

Sunday Services Committee



## Up-coming Sunday Services

### Sunday Services 10:30 am at 874 York Street

We are very pleased to be able to provide Hybrid services now. With the wonderful technical help from a few of our members we are able to have both Zoom and in-house services. The Sunday Services are being recorded for viewing later, however, the sharing of Joys and Concerns will not be recorded for reasons of confidentiality.

**Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>** As part of our recognition of Human Rights Day on December 10<sup>th</sup>, UFF has invited the Acting Director of the Atlantic Human Rights Centre (AHRC) to speak with us about the work of the Centre.

*Guest Speaker* – Dr. Shannonbrooke Murphy

*Service Leader* – Joan McFarland

*Tech* – Myron Hedderson

**Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>** *Climate Change: What Happened at Glasgow, and What Needs to Happen Over the Next 9 Years*

*Speaker* – Myron Hedderson

*Service Leader* – Haifa Miller

*Tech* – Kurtis Langevin

**Dec. 19<sup>th</sup>** *Advent and Christmas Music.* We will be hearing a variety of special music chosen by members of our congregation. Singing joyfully together (with masks

## Sunday Service December 12

**Some interesting observations for his service on Climate Change from Myron.**

While there is broad agreement that climate change is a serious problem that needs to be addressed as soon as possible, when you start digging into the details, there

are areas of significant disagreement. Some people say we have all the tools we need to solve this, and all that is lacking is political will. Others say we're doomed and the "keep 1.5 alive" rhetoric is a fantasy. Some tout the agreements reached at Glasgow as a major step in the right direction, others see them as meaningless political posturing. As those of you who have been to one of Myron's presentations before may be able to guess, this will be an information-packed 40 minutes where Myron digs into these different perspectives, and lays out the facts as we currently understand them about where we are, what was agreed at the Glasgow climate conference, where we need to get to by 2030, and how we might get there. The plan is that similar presentations will be made at least annually from now until 2030, tracking how we do as the decade progresses.



## **An Opportunity for a Techie, Aspiring Techie, or Interested Person**

Is there a technically oriented young person in your life who might be interested in earning some extra cash while learning about the big questions of life? The Sunday Services committee is seeking someone like that to help out with the delivery of our hybrid services. The commitment would be 2 hours (from 10:00-12:00) one or two Sundays per month, at a rate of \$50 per Sunday. The task would be to run the technology for our Hybrid services, by setting up and taking down the video and audio equipment, and running the Zoom session during the service, including displaying videos and slide shows as provided by the presenter. Training and all necessary equipment will be provided, all that is really required is a can-do attitude.

PS: If "can-do attitude" describes you, and you want to lighten the load on Kurtis and Myron, or learn how to conduct a hybrid meeting yourself (for an evening or weekend discussion group, for example), Myron will be providing one or more training sessions in January. Just let him know you'd like to join in by emailing [m.hedderson@hotmail.com](mailto:m.hedderson@hotmail.com), and he'll put you on the list.



## **Joys and Concerns from the Caring Circle**

The Caring Circle will be making flower arrangements again for our older members and delivering them in December and we will also be calling people to check on how they are doing during our second year of dealing with COVID

The Caring Circle is thrilled to announce a skills sharing initiative to help create community.

The link for the obituary of Tom Hanley, a beloved member of our fellowship and Glenna's brother.

<http://www.mcadamsfh.com/obituaries/157602>

The Caring Circle is available to help in any way we can with a phone call or virtual visit or delivery of any items. Please get in touch with Janet Crawford [janetcra@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:janetcra@nbnet.nb.ca) or 454-0441. We haven't had a lot of requests for help, but we could use more volunteers or committee members. Volunteers are needed to Offer drives Make and/or deliver food Visit or make phone calls Attend committee meetings with your enthusiasm and ideas.

The caring circle has a Facebook page

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

If you have any postings for Joys and Concerns in Touchstone, send to [janetcra@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:janetcra@nbnet.nb.ca)

Other committee members are. Nancy Beltrandi, Deby Nash, Myron Hedderson, Decima Mitchell and Robin Stanley.



## **President's Summary from the Board Meeting of November 14, 2021**

UFF Pledge Drive planning has begun, with fifty copies of the Pledge Letter being made available to members and friends of the Fellowship.

\$69 per member will be the cost of our fee for next year's membership in our national body, the Canadian Unitarian Council.

Our application for funding in support of our energy retrofit has been submitted to the West Trust.

The Board passed a motion to instruct our delegates, Jenn-Carpenter-Gleim and Myron Hedderson, to approve the 8<sup>th</sup> principle at the Nov. 27 CUC AGM. This decision was guided by the congregational response to the proposed 8<sup>th</sup> Principle at the meeting held October 16.

A draft Safety Policy for the UFF was discussed. The next step in developing the Safety Policy will be to consult with Committee Chairs and other members of the Congregation.

Budget requests for next year's programs and activities will be obtained from Committee Chairs.

The next Board Meeting will be held after the Sunday Service of December 5, starting at 1 PM. We will meet in person at the Fellowship. All are welcome to attend.

Submitted by Decima Mitchell



## Holiday Wishes

Your Board of Directors would like to wish you all the best during the Holiday season and beyond as we move forward into winter in the Maritimes. We will be meeting via Zoom for the next few months, beginning in January. As always, members and friends of the Congregation are welcome to attend these meetings. The meetings via Zoom will use the same link as the Sunday Services.

**All Meetings start at 1:00p.m.**

Meeting Dates:

December 5 at the Fellowship

January 16 via Zoom

February 20 via Zoom

March 20 via Zoom

April 10 via Zoom

May 15 at the Fellowship

June 5 at the Fellowship

Decima Mitchell



## Eighth Principle passes; now what?

Congregation members learned this week that the Eighth Principle on anti-racism was adopted by an overwhelming majority of delegates at a special Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) national meeting held on Nov. 27.

There were 104 delegates, representing 40 of our 44 UU congregations, in attendance at the virtual meeting and 95 per cent voted in favour of the new principle that will be added to our existing seven.

Our two delegates, Myron Hedderson and Jenn Carpenter Gleim, were instructed by our board to vote yes for the principal, following a congregational meeting which showed a clear interest in support of the motion, put forward by the CUC board.

The original seven principles were adopted by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) in the US in 1961 and became the basic principles also followed by the Canadian Unitarian Council and its Canadian congregations. Word-ing of the principles was changed in 1984 but there have been no changes since.

The new principle will read: *“We, the member congregations of the Canadian Unitarian Council, covenant to affirm and promote: **Individual and communal action that accountably dismantles racism and systemic barriers to full inclusion in ourselves and our institutions.**”*

This special meeting was held because a vote first held, and passed, at the AGM last May, proved to be an invalid process. Since then there has been a lot of meaningful debate and discussion. Some very heated and controversial

arguments were also exchanged and, as a result of the Nov. 27 vote, some members have already notified the CUC they will be quitting their congregations. We hope this will be only a small minority.

Other UU members have been in the fight against racism for years and, for them, this day has been a long time coming.

Well, now we have this new principle what are we going to do with it?

The CUC board has already adopted three other recommendations from the Dismantling Racism Study Group, from where the original wording of the eighth principle came. These are: Do the work of anti-racism now; Listen to BIPOC voices (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour, although I think the official acronym we will be using will be “IBPOC”); and the last one, “A willed commitment to racial justice work, demonstrated by an investment of resources at the national and congregational level.”

The CUC board and staff are looking at the finances and seeing where monies can be found to hire staff to lead the work we hope to do and to see such initiatives passed along to the congregational level.

Programs such as the CUC Truth, Healing and Reconciliation Group and the Welcoming Congregation program for LGBTQ++ are being suggested as models for how we move forward. Some other ideas suggested by the study group are creating an anti-racism curriculum for white Canadian UUs, assemble and disseminate educational materials to congregations; create a best practices guide for congregations.

Also, according to CUC executive director Vyda Ng, in the future all CUC programming will be planned with an inclusive, decolonizing, multi-generational lens.

Quoting from the Dismantling Racism Study, “The promise of our faith is a spiritual home in which all can live authentically, seek meaning, and foster interdependence. To manifest this promise, we must address the racism and bias in our congregations and communities, both for the times we are in and for future generations.”

Stay tuned for more information on what we can do here at UFF to advance the cause of anti-racism.

**Personal Note:** *Due to a death in my family I was unable to attend the special meeting and the weekend’s CUC 60th anniversary events. However as a CUC board member I will be engaging with the board and staff in what follows for this historic event in the life of our faith community.*

Glenna Hanley

CUC Board Member and UFF liaison with CUC



## Reflections of a Delegate on the Ups and Downs of Adopting an Eighth Principle

As I understand it, Glenna has prepared some reflections on the process of adopting an eighth principle from the perspective of a CUC board member. I thought it would also be valuable to give you some sense of what it was like to be a part of the process, as one of the delegates representing the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton.

The short version is, it has been a bit of a roller coaster, but it turned out well in the end.

Back at the CUC AGM in May, I was expecting it to be a dry affair, with motions we have all known about for months adopted without much controversy, as had always been the case in the CUC meetings I had attended before. A day before the meeting, the Dismantling Racism Study Group report came out. I tried to find time to read the report before the meeting, but I was busy, and couldn't manage it. So it came as a total shock to me when, during the meeting, a motion was made from the floor, to adopt an eighth principle from a report I hadn't yet read, on the spot. This was not how things were normally done AT ALL, but a motion to suspend our normal rules in order to consider this motion received over 2/3 support, and this seemed to satisfy people at the time. And when the motion to adopt an 8th principle passed with much more than a majority of support, there were tears of joy from many, and rumblings of concern that proper process hadn't been followed from a few. Personally, I felt as if I couldn't properly represent you as a delegate in respect to a change of this significance, without having read the Dismantling Racism Study Group report, given it any consideration, or discussed the possibility of adopting an eighth principle with any members of the Fellowship. Anti-racism certainly sounded like the sort of thing we would all be on board with, but I was concerned that there might have been perspectives I hadn't considered, and it all seemed very rushed to me, despite many people's insistence that this effort had been going on for years and could not wait any longer. As a result, I abstained from voting in that initial vote.

In the days that followed, it became clear that the vote had been rushed, and it was ruled invalid. But at the same time, it was clear that a significant proportion of Unitarians would be deeply saddened and frustrated if we waited more years before taking any action. It seemed to me that the CUC needed to thread a metaphorical needle - to put enough process in place so that needed congregational discussions could happen and give the people like me who were just now realizing that this work had been ongoing for years time to catch up, while not leaving those who

had been working to dismantle racism, or experiencing it firsthand, disappointed to the point of feeling like they should step back from this faith. On the CUC leaders email list during the months between May and November, there were sometimes heated discussions between those in passionate support of the eighth principle, and those making arguments about following what they regarded as good and necessary processes however long they may take, everyone feeling free to take action in the interim which would be what would really matter, and long and involved arguments around how, precisely, the principle should be worded.

The forum process the CUC followed during this time, for bringing us to consensus, was interesting, and not what I expected. Instead of being a forum for debate or open discussion of different views, an airing of different perspectives, the forums appeared to be efforts to educate white UUs about racism, and ask us to introspect about the feelings that proposing an anti-racist principle brought up in us. Were we resistant because acknowledging that we live in a racist society = admitting to being racist = admitting to being a bad person, in our minds? Were we resistant to change in the communities we valued? Were we feeling guilt, uncertainty, or other negative emotions? And so on. It was pointed out that debating and delaying over process, and wordsmithing, could be seen as a form of resistance to action, and was a feature of "white supremacy culture", where the most highly educated (in institutions that tended to exclude IBPOC people and privilege whites) had the upper hand in making linguistic and process arguments, and could shut down the perspectives of those who were less able to argue (or interested in arguing) on those terms. Which... these were all fair points and thought provoking questions, but my personal feelings of resistance were more around the fact that it seemed like the outcome of these non-discussions was a foregone conclusion, and the mode of decision making I have grown up with, where differing perspectives are expressed and discussed before a decision is reached, so that any flaws in each can be found and the best possible decision made, wasn't being followed.

On the other hand, when I thought about it some more, I could see why this choice was made. I find it difficult to put myself in the shoes of someone who has experienced much oppression, as a white cisgendered heterosexual man from a middle class background, and I've got to keep in mind that what might seem the obvious way to do things to me, might not be practical for others. Specifically, asking IBPOC people to argue their point of view to a mostly white audience who they may reasonably fear would be resistant to hearing them, is unlikely to work and could easily cause great harm when some people accidentally say deeply hurtful or dismissive things without realizing it. As most Internet comment sections display, it can be difficult to have a good computer-mediated discussion among a large group, and often the most (to put it kindly) passionate people in any discussion take up all the oxygen.



The forums the CUC put on gave us as a community of predominantly older white people some space to think about and reflect upon some unpleasant facts we may be resistant to, about the culture and society we live in, without forcing those who are on the receiving end of racism to explain to those who aren't that their experiences are actually happening, what that's like, and why we should all work to change things that are harming them.

Like I said at the beginning, this was all a bit of a roller-coaster. The discussions within our congregation as much as the forums and the CUC votes. I thought it would all go smoothly within our group, but then in a couple small groups, I'd started to hear the sentiment that maybe racism isn't such a problem here in Fredericton as it is in the US and larger Canadian cities, because the person speaking hadn't really seen it here. I mean, it's possible that the person hadn't seen any racism because Fredericton is a post-racial utopia, but that doesn't seem very likely and I would have felt a lot more confident in that conclusion if there had been even one non-white person around the table at the time. So when we had our congregational meeting, I was worried how it would go. Would there be a clear consensus? But in the end, there was, which was a great relief to me. Our board directed myself and Jenn as delegates to vote in favour of adopting the slightly-revised eighth principle, and I thought that finally it would be smooth sailing from here.

During the meeting in November, it started out seeming like things would go as expected. After the formalities of meeting-starting and quorum-verifying were settled, several people spoke in support of the motion to adopt the 8th principle. And then, a curve ball. Two people, one after another, rose to say that as LGBTQ+ members, they felt this principle as worded excluded and harmed them and would undo some of the work done to make Unitarianism welcoming to them, and they would be voting against. And shortly afterwards, someone moved to "postpone indefinitely" – to cease discussion of this motion at this meeting, without implying opposition to the motion itself. What followed was somewhat surreal. Instead of focusing discussion on this new motion until it was resolved, speakers were allowed to speak either for or against the motion to adopt the 8th principle, or for or against postponing this discussion indefinitely, as they chose. Those who spoke expressed a mix of procedural and substantive points that became increasingly confusing and difficult to follow, although impassioned support for adopting an eighth principle, and repeated statements by LGBTQ+ members that they felt included and supported, were prominent. After a while, someone called the question (meaning, called for a vote) on the "postpone indefinitely" motion, but this was ruled not in line with our procedures. In order to overrule our normal procedures, we would have to have a vote with two thirds in favour of doing so. So, we had a vote about whether to vote about whether to vote on the 8th principle. Many people were understandably confused

about what was happening, and it had to be explained several times until everyone had it straight what we were voting for. Fortunately, more than 2/3 voted in favour of having an immediate vote regarding whether or not to "postpone indefinitely", and shortly thereafter a solid super majority voted to continue the discussion rather than postpone, which allowed us to climb out of the rabbit hole and return the focus of discussion to whether or not to adopt the 8th principle. In the end, it was adopted with 95

This roller coaster has ended (or at least paused for now) with me convinced some change is needed, and with a better understanding of why people care about changing things I don't even always see, let alone see as problematic, at first. I think the next few years, when the CUC produces some education which will help us to dismantle barriers (racist and otherwise) which IBPOC and others face to feeling welcome and included in our congregations will be an interesting time of growth. I'm glad I had the opportunity to be your delegate in this matter, and I've learned a lot as a result.

Myron Hedderson



## An Update on our Pledge Campaign

Thank you for your generous response to our 2022 Pledge Campaign. And a special thanks to all who took part in our Pledge Sunday. It was fun!

As the building and our meeting space benefit from our retrofit, the money allocated at the last Annual Meeting is being used efficiently, and the Board has begun to apply for grants and rebates. Our VP Finance, Glenna Hanley, says that the Fellowship has been given \$1500 by the West Fund, and we have begun the process of applying for a retrofit rebate under NB Power's Energy Efficiency Program.

Now it is time to re-fill our coffers, in anticipation of our next fiscal year, winter power bills, and budget allocations for our Annual Budget Meeting in January. Committee chairs: a reminder that you need to get your budget wishes to the Secretary, Joan Brewer, very soon.

To date, the Pledge Campaign total is just under \$13,000. We did not set a goal this year, and I have no thermometer like Suzanne did last December, but the generosity of our members and friends continues to support our congregation's services and events. It also covers our Annual Program Contribution for CUC services and ensures the bills are paid each month and the yard maintained.

There is still time to give your proposed pledge details to your Treasurer, who will ensure it is carefully recorded and post-dated cheques secured. Donations made by e-transfer and those made by pre-authorized cheque are credited at the end of each month, when the Omista statement is

received and reviewed. Weekly contributions are recorded by two members, and regular deposits are taken to the Credit Union by a Board member.

Just a brief reminder that if you wish your annual donation, or a special 'year end' gift to the UFF to be credited and receipted for tax purposes for the 2021 fiscal year, the cheque 'must' be dated on or before December 31, 2021. Cheques dated on or after January 1, 2022 must be credited and receipted for tax purposes for the 2022 fiscal year. This may seem nit-picky but it is the law according to the Canada Revenue Agency. Treasurers have to be nit-picky, too! Receipts for income tax purposes will be prepared by mid- February.

Again, thank you all. The time, treasures and talents you share are appreciated.

In Fellowship,  
Heather Lunergan  
Chair of the Pledge Committee and Treasurer

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## The Father of Christmas

This is a month to celebrate Charles Dickens, British Unitarian, and author of A Christmas Carol. When Dickens wrote A Christmas Carol in 1843, many Christmas traditions had almost died out, and the holiday was hardly celebrated. England was becoming more and more industrial, and people leaving farms to work in factories had left their old customs behind.



But the story, which was wildly popular, brought enthusiasm back to practices like singing carols and feasting on special foods. The picture of the Cratchit family celebrating their Christmas together inspired people to find a way to celebrate Christmas in the cities, and the change of heart which comes to Ebenezer Scrooge reminded people that Christmas was traditionally a time when the wealthy folk shared with the poorer people.

In fact, Dickens was very concerned with the conditions of poor people at a time when the gap between the rich and the poor was getting wider and wider. Many of his books deal with this theme, and he became a Unitarian because, as he said, they "would do something for human improvement if they could; and practice charity and toleration".

As Unitarian Universalists, we do not turn away from noticing the gaps that separate "haves" from "have nots". To work against inequity, we know we first have to see it. Unitarian Charles Dickens saw it. Born poor, he later earned a living as a writer and joined a more comfortable economic class. Dickens used colourful character portraits

and complex, often humorous plots, to expose tragic inequities in 19th century British society. He showed that people at opposite ends of an economic spectrum belong to the same "we", united by our common humanity and destiny – a lesson which resounds with our contemporary Unitarian Universalist Principles.

Submitted by  
Sheila Moore

\* This article comes from Quest For Meaning, a program of the Church of the Larger Fellowship which is a UU congregation with no geographic boundary. The CLF creates global spiritual community cultivating wonder, imagination and the courage to act.

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## Further to "What Does It Mean to be a Unitarian Universalist?"

Our denomination is unique because every Unitarian Universalist has the right to develop a personal philosophy of life, without being told what to believe. We can learn from all philosophies and religions, and also from science and the arts. We explore important life issues in a caring community, united by shared values rather than by shared theological opinions. And no matter what we do believe about theology or philosophy, we try to live a good life and leave the world better than when we found it.

Rev. Chris Schriner  
– Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation  
of Fremont, California

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## Inclusion

What does it mean to be inclusive? While there have been some great strides in how society includes people compared to other historical periods (based on race, religion, gender, etc.) it seems as though we, as a society, have recently regressed. Even churches and faith communities are excluding their own members. I am speaking, or course, of the treatment of unvaccinated persons.

Now let me preface this essay with a few caveats. First, is that my reasons for remaining unvaccinated are based on creedal/religious beliefs. I believe it is inherently wrong to intentionally harm animals for any purpose, even for one's own benefit. Animals are given souls and spirits by God. This is a Biblically grounded and divinely inspired belief. This is also a deontological belief system. It, therefore, cannot be circumvented by any sort of appeal to 'utilitarian calculus' or another ethical frameworks. It would be like someone saying they are against slavery but then buying products of child or slave labour because of some benefit to them or others (i.e., usually cost savings). One needs to revolt from the entire industry if one is to be

truly opposed to a practice they abhor. Unfortunately, no vaccines are made without significant harm to animals. They were tested using fetal cells. Something I am also opposed to. I also recently became aware (although I had many suspicions) that the testing products being used are also products of animal harm. I cannot, in good conscious, use any of these products, despite possible risk to myself. This is my cross to bear.

The second caveat is that people who are unvaccinated have essentially lost the freedom to associate in person with their religious communities is not entirely the fault of the churches. Government mandates are being imposed upon them. But is following orders a reasonable ground for discrimination? It has not been a justifiable reason throughout any period in history. In fact, Jesus purportedly healed a leper by touching him. According to the Levitical laws, people with leprosy should be locked up and segregated too. They were unclean. But Jesus ignored this institutional order because he had compassion for sick people. Christians are commanded to visit sick people in the Bible. Not let them die alone and frightened as the government would have us do.

And being unvaccinated does not even inherently make one sick. In fact, there is little evidence that being vaccinated significantly reduces spread. A recent Lancet study cited vaccination only provides a slight reduction in initially contracting the virus, but once contracted, the transmissibility and peak viral loads for the variants were the same regardless of vaccination status. We have been told that getting vaccinated will get us out of this, but this is apparently a carrot being dangled on a stick. New Brunswick has one of the highest vaccination rates and yet cases are rampant. They have now stopped disclosing the status of cases now. This is likely because in other heavily vaccinated country, like Israel, vaccinated cases and deaths are making up most of the cases as well. Governments should be taking a science-based approach, not a fear based and discriminatory approach. But governments need scapegoats to function properly. It has always been this way: the “in crowd” versus the “other”.

I know my reasons for being unvaccinated may differ from that of many other unvaccinated persons. But I just wanted to let people know some of the moral ramifications of simply following orders. And it really should not matter what someone’s beliefs are that prevent them from willingly taking the vaccine. The level of coercion from all forms of government to exclude the unvaccinated are disturbing. Should we just remain silent and hope it will be different than the last time? Austria already announced, beginning in February, it will start jailing and fining unvaccinated persons. People do not think these atrocities can happen again, but they are. And the comparison to previous forms of discrimination is apt. Persecution based on my creedal/religious beliefs now preclude me from many activities I may otherwise wish to engage in. Seeing my

wife’s concert, attending a worship service, dining with friends and family at a restaurant, leaving the country, and even my employment are all things that I am now barred from. All things that have been barred in the past to other discriminated groups. I have even repeatedly wished death for myself as it feels like my most deeply held beliefs (and therefore my innermost being) do not have a place in society any longer. People who thought we would have vaccine passports were deemed conspiracy theorists a year ago. But look where we are now. We are that country, despite our Prime Minister’s admonitions several months ago. This time it will be different, right?

Chris Grant



## Conundrum

In my monthly call to the congregation for articles for Touchstone, I write: “*Anything of interest to the congregation is welcome.*” When we had only seven principles, the fourth was what I liked to call, the central principle: “*A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.*”. Central to this principle is that truth and meaning are not absolute. Looking at the same evidence you may come to a completely different conclusion than I.

As Unitarians, we should at least be curious as to how another person could come to a belief which we may each personally find completely off the mark. As I sometimes say, though, a profoundly held belief and \$3.50 will get you a cup of coffee, but, of course, another person may have the same opinion regarding my own beliefs. Fair game.

And so, I published the preceding article, “*Inclusion*”. The only comment I will make is that I know of no biologist who would classify a virus as an animal. If there is any controversy, it is as to whether viruses are alive at all. Google “are viruses alive”.

I am now going to ignore the part of my brain which is screaming to continue and simply, say “good night Gracie.”

Tony Fitzgerald  
Touchstone Compositor



## Thomas Francis Hanley

1942-2021

*"Go placidly amid the noise & haste & remember what Peace there may be in silence."* (opening to "Desiderata")

a composition favourite of Thomas Hanley

Thomas Francis Hanley 1942-2021: A native of Sussex, New Brunswick and proud of it; passed away at the Dr. Everett Chalmers Hospital with family by his side in Fredericton, NB.



Thomas' life was lived in constant pursuit of learning and turning thoughts into actions. Till one week prior to his death he was still reading, exploring, learning; "what is the humans' real position or responsibility within the Universe?", he asked. Thomas donated his body to Dalhousie University, Faculty of Medicine: Anatomy & Neurobiology as a "learning gift" for students and faculty to continue exploration after his death to answer some of his burning questions.

**Education:** His character and commitment were evident at a young age. He excelled in scholastics, from grade school to University Degrees and areas of personal interest, earning trophies and Scholarships along the way. UNB Bachelor of Physical Education: distinction "Stellar Graduate" and Springfield College Master of Science with a Minor in Religious studies.

**Professional Status and Accomplishments:** Thomas Hanley started his career as a teacher at Riverview High School then Saint John High School. He taught math, biology and coached various sports bringing both schools to competitive status. His skills were such that he was asked to take an education leadership role with New Brunswick Government. He moved through various positions: Supervisor of Sport and Recreation, Supervisor of Physical Education, Curriculum Consultant in Health and Physical Education, Director of Professional Development, Innovation Leader, until his retirement.

Thomas took little note of titles. His commitment was to positive outcomes through encouragement and tenacity. Author Thomas Hanley is on a long list of curriculum materials published in the province. He developed a compulsory physical education program as a requirement for graduation. He developed an elective leadership course that stimulated many students to enrol and become their generation's leaders. Before any national movement was being made, Thomas was already creating the materials, working intensely with teachers, specialists, and the NB

Government for progressive innovations for teachers and youth. Thomas was the driving force behind the NB Health and Physical Education Council; the Bulletin Editor of the regional association; served twice on the Board of Directors for CAHPER (Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education & Recreation) and a strong supporter of SPAP (School Physical Activity Programs). Thomas was an Honourary Director of the PGAC (Professional Golf Association of Canada) due to his extensive coach education work with them.

He was instrumental in the formation of the first Physical Education Council for the New Brunswick Teachers Association; the development and implementation of a Physical Education Kit for generalist teachers in elementary schools- a resource so successful that it received national exposure and was adopted by several US states as well. He developed programs to help teachers deal with the extremely sensitive and politically charged areas of sex education and AIDS education. Thomas was selected to a team exchanging educational and sport concept ideas with East Germany before the Berlin Wall came down. Other countries with education learning exchanges were in England, Mexico, and Australia.

He was most proud of being awarded the R. Tait McKenzie Award of Honor; the most prestigious award presented by CAPHER (Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education & Recreation). Thomas felt this Award far surpassed any degree he had attained; to have the respect of your peers and giving unwavering support to them is the ultimate sense of achievement. No books, no words, no prestigious moments could compare.

**Community Service and Activity:** Endless volunteer support, always on-call for events involving children or youth in sport and recreation. He was well known as a basketball referee, having blown the whistle for 50 years and played for even more. As he aged, he started the Masters basketball leagues so anyone could continue to play as long as they wanted to. His teammates are forever friends. Thomas played seven different sports in high school, two in university, two at the intermediate and master's level. He coached five sports, an official in three. From player to official to teacher to coach to administrator, he seems to have done it all.

He served with the Canadian Red Cross for many years notably as a Team Leader for Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans; Team trainer and volunteer on-site for Community Disaster Relief; Team participant on the constructing of an Evacuation Process for the Village of New Maryland; and with Disaster Relief Team for the Newfoundland Ice Storm.

**Recreation:** Thomas Hanley loved music. In retirement he joined two choirs and assisted with the function of the choirs in various capacities. He took guitar lessons, helped young students learn to read, and developed a High School Leadership, Personal Development Program in association



with the Canadian Veterans Association.

He lived much of his life on, under, or beside some form of water. Canoes, kayaks, motor boats, and playing in the water were essential summer activities. In later years he spent much time building and living at his cabin on the lake. Many fireside sunsets, with a little guitar picking and singing alone or with family and friends. There was always space at "Uncle Tom's Cabin" for family, friends, or anyone walking the lake shore. People knew where to find Uncle Tom's Cabin knowing an open door and big hug welcomed you.

**Family:** Thomas was a family man, one of 10 children, married for 55 years with 3 children and 3 grandchildren – Madelaine Hanley, Kieran Hanley, Thomas Holloway. Thomas had great fun with affectionate names for his children; Tommy is 'The Champ', Chantelle is 'Princess', and Tyler is 'Tigger;' while his wife Carol Ann was 'Me Darlin'. Survived also by his sister Glenna Hanley, brother Patrick Hanley and wife Moira, brother Murraray Branscombe and wife June, sister-in-law Elaine Brown and husband Donald, brother-in-law Ronald Guerrier and many nieces and nephews.

Predeceased by his parents Thomas Frederick Hanley and Frances Gertrude (Whalen, Branscombe) Hanley; sisters Edna Miklos and her husband Steve, Doris Branscombe, Marita Mason and husband Warren, Serena Renner and husband Paul; brothers Michael Ward Branscombe and wife Jean, Gilbert Branscombe and wife Alice, niece Lori Branscombe, mother-in-law Jean Lane, and brother-in-law Robert Guerrier.

**Thomas Francis Hanley Statement:** "With all my professional accolades above, the greatest of all are the friends I treasure and friendships that will be felt and remembered long after my death. My family and friends, you know who you are, you are my most treasured gifts by which I measured my personal worth."

A memorial gathering was held at McAdam's Funeral Home on Saturday, November 27th, 2021. A live-stream is available at the following link:

<https://vimeo.com/650599537>

For those who wish, donations in Thomas' memory can be made to the Fredericton Boys and Girls Club or a charity of the donor's choice.



## École Polytechnique Massacre

December 6<sup>th</sup> marks the anniversary of an event in 1989 when an antifeminist gunman entered a mechanical engineering class at l'École Polytechnique. He separated nine women to one side of the classroom and ordered the men to leave. Opening fire, he shot all nine women, killing six. The shooter then moved through corridors, the cafeteria and another classroom, targeting women for another twenty minutes. A further eight women were killed before the gunman killed himself. Fourteen others, ten women and four men, were injured.

Let us never forget:

- Geneviève Bergeron, civil engineering student
- Hélène Colgan, mechanical engineering student
- Nathalie Croteau, mechanical engineering student
- Barbara Daigneault, mechanical engineering student
- Anne-Marie Edward, chemical engineering student
- Maud Haviernick, materials engineering student
- Maryse Laganière, budget clerk in the École Polytechnique's finance department
- Maryse Leclair, materials engineering student
- Anne-Marie Lemay, mechanical engineering student
- Sonia Pelletier, mechanical engineering student
- Michèle Richard, materials engineering student
- Annie St-Arneault, mechanical engineering student
- Annie Turcotte, materials engineering student
- Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz, nursing student



## Kabul Beauty School

**An American woman goes behind the veil**

Deborah Rodriguez

This book takes us into another world in the capital of Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban in 2001. Deborah went over as part of a humanitarian group and a hairdresser. She left a difficult marriage and her two children behind in America and gives the impression she was desperate to achieve a better life for other women and for herself.

Hairdressing was in demand as women had the tradition of their own beauty salons. So she managed to get sponsorship for a salon where she would teach female students in 2003. This empowered a few to become family breadwinners. Students and teacher became friends and their heart-rending stories show problems for Afghan women did not vanish with the 2001 American army control of Kabul. Forced marriages were still arranged. Violent treatment

of wives continued and because men were not allowed in salons women there were accused of being in a brothel. There are success stories too.

Deborah came closer to the community by accepting a marriage arranged by her pupils! Her husband had a wife and family elsewhere and her sparse knowledge of the local language and his limited English hindered their communication, but he was certainly a big help keeping the school going and defending Deborah and the students against serious violence and opposition. The marriage lasted even when she had to return to America. One of her sons came over to join her and had similar problems trying to help

in another culture.

Critics have said Rodriguez pushed the cultural boundaries too far, creating new problems for some of her students. Her certainty that, as an American, she was right has some other examples in politics. Some might consider this as an example of colonialism. Are beauty salons the place for women to gather and communicate? Does everyone want to be beautiful, as she claims in the Readers Guide discussion and if so, according to whose standards? Is she a heroine? There is plenty to discuss and consider in this glimpse of another world. Fredericton Library has the book.

Sheila Andrew

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