



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)

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## Up-coming Sunday Services

10:30 am in person and via zoom

The Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton  
 Our Plan for Living with COVID and Influenza

**Objective:** Keeping in mind that many of our Fellowship members are seniors, and people who are immunocompromised and therefore at a higher risk of contracting viruses, we ask that people experiencing flu and/or cold symptoms join the Sunday service by ZOOM.

- **MASKS:** are optional but we ask that you respect those who may wish you to wear a mask in their presence.

### April 2nd Paddling the Beautiful and Bountiful

**Speaker:** Tony Fitzgerald

**Tech Support:** T.B.A.

The Wolastoq and her tributaries are a scenic and relaxing space to commune with nature. Tony has retired his old canoe for a brand new boat and will share a bit of what runs through the middle of our city.

### April 9th Easter Service: Welcoming the Season of Renewal

**Service Leaders:** Janet Crawford and Heather Lunergan

**Tech Support:** T.B.A.

Join Janet Crawford and Heather Lunergan for a Spring/Easter celebration in music, words, and pictures. Janet will show some of her original photographs and

speaking about what walking and taking pictures brings to her life. Heather will offer musical selections and readings. Please bring a brief reading or a short poem to share as we join to celebrate the season of renewal.

### April 16th Loving the Unloved

**Service Leader:** Amber Langevin

**Tech Support:** T.B.A.

Amber has spent over a decade working with youth in care and young offenders in the province. Her talk, "Loving the Unloved" relates to lessons she learned while working with youth in care.

### April 23rd AI: Where we are, where we're headed, and what it might mean

**Service Leader:** Myron Hedderson

**Tech Support:** Wyatt Elliott

Myron explained his title thus: During the fall, and even more so in the spring, new developments in artificial intelligence have been announced in rapid succession, much faster than even AI researchers expected a year or two ago. The Effective Altruist community which Myron has presented on before believes that making sure AI goes well, which they call "AI Alignment" is likely one of the most important things a person can do with their career, and if it goes badly, that could be very very bad. Myron will discuss the developments that have happened recently, what it means in terms of where things may be headed, what efforts are underway to make sure where things are headed is someplace good, and what we know so far in answer to some of the "big questions" we will have to answer if we create a machine intelligence as capable as humans in the near future.

How will he fit all of that into half an hour? Even he does not know... Given how fast things are moving, the focus of this service may change between when this is published in Touchstone and when the service occurs, but if you're interested in the current state of play when it comes to creating artificial intelligence, this is the talk for you.

### April 30th Searching for the Meaning of Life

**Service Leader:** Ken Little

**Tech Support:** Myron Hedderson

Ken has given this overview of this, the first of three talks he plans to give over the coming months. He writes: As I approach the end of my life on Earth I am trying to sort out my thoughts about where we came from, how we got to where we are now and what we need to do

to continue to thrive as a species. The April service is the first of three that I am proposing. It will focus on the first issue, the origin of life. The second service in the series will look at the ascendancy of homo sapiens and the current state of the world. The final service will look to the future and explore course corrections that may help us survive as a species.

### May 7<sup>th</sup> Lay Chaplain Sunday

**Speakers:** Jenn Carpenter-Gleim and Decima Mitchell

**Service Leader:** Tony Fitzgerald

**Tech Support:** T.B.A.

The CUC recommends that each congregation set aside a service to talk about the Lay Chaplaincy. This is that Sunday.



## Report on the Board Meeting of March 19, 2023

Tracy Gleim provided inspiring opening words to begin the meeting.

The Canadian Unitarian Council has scheduled its Annual General Meeting on Friday, May 19, in person and online, via Zoom. The meeting will start at 2:00 AT. Each year, the UFF enlists two delegates from the Membership to represent us at the AGM. This year, our delegates, via Zoom, are Tracy Gleim and Heather Lunergan.

Delegates Heather and Tracy will share with the Congregation, the motions that are going to be discussed and voted upon at the AGM, so that they can best represent our views at the country-wide gathering.

Web Designer Mindy Foster met with the Board via Zoom to answer questions about the process of updating our website. Myron Hedderson will contact Mindy and our Web Master, Tony Fitzgerald, to set up a meeting to discuss the process further.

Heather submitted the Balance Sheet as of Dec. 31, 2022, a draft of the 2023 Budget and an Income Statement for the period from Jan. 01, 2022 to Dec. 31, 2022.

Heather informed the Board about the UUA donation of record, sent in February. The Sharing our Faith report to the CUC is being prepared and will be sent by March 31.

Heather will be contacting the CRA to set up an account for the filing of HST rebates. She will establish treasurer@uff.ca as the contact address for future communications between the UFF and the CRA.

Myron reported on his investigation of Google Ad Grants. This may be a direction that a future Board pursues after the redesign of our website.

Decima will be serving again this year on the Nominating Committee with Janet Crawford. Decima will search for a third member to assist on this committee.

After many years of service, Ken Moore will be retiring from his position as Chair of the Building and Grounds Committee this Summer. Heather will ask Ken to prepare a check-list of items needing to be attended to on a regular basis. This check-list will help the B&G Committee to monitor the safety and security of our building and grounds, going forward.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30.

Submitted by Decima Mitchell  
President, UFF Board



## Full Moon Ceremonies

Carlos Gomes and his friend Wendy Kennedy have begun holding full-moon ceremonies at the Fellowship. They begin at 7 pm on Wednesday evenings each month. Upcoming dates are April 5 and May 3. These ceremonies include words and rhythms for celebration and healing. Hand-drummers, pagans, members and friends of the Fellowship, and interested community members are all invited. A donation to the Fellowship will be gratefully accepted. For more information, write to Jo-Anne and Carlos at [eldergomesfamily@gmail.com](mailto:eldergomesfamily@gmail.com).



## Unitarian Women's Potluck Gathering

Women's potluck Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup> will be held at TUFF, 874 York Street.

Gather at 6 pm and eat at 6:30.

No planning for the food. We give thanks for whatever is offered.

**Topic:** Where does your happiness come from? **OR** What brings you joy?

For more Information

Joan Brewer  
[jebrewer@rogers.com](mailto:jebrewer@rogers.com)  
(506) 455-5169



## The Canadian Unitarian-Universalist Women's Association (CUUWA)

Joan and Najat are the Atlantic representatives on the Council of the CUUWA. CUUWA is the CUC feminist organization.

The CUUWA's main activities this year have been offering the online course, Rise Up and Call Her Name (that we drew from in our IWD service on March 12), preparing a resource package for International Women's Day services,

and organizing the annual Pink Tea and AGM which is held in May during the CUC symposium. The CUUWA also has a Feminist Watch and a meditative poetry group.

The CUUWA is always looking for new members. Membership forms are available at the Fellowship and online at the CUUWA website.

The Pink Tea that we talked about in our IWD service will be in person in Ottawa and also available online on Sunday, May 19 at 4pm Atlantic time. All are welcome. It is free and you don't have to be a member to participate. The speaker will be El Jones, a poet, activist, professor at Mt. St. Vincent University and a wonderful speaker.

More information on all of the above is available in the sources listed below, starting with the CUUWA website:

Canadian Unitarian Universalist Women's Association website <http://cuuwa.ca>

Pink tea -May 21 - 3:00-4:30pm EST - Info on how to join virtually here

<http://cuuwa.ca/news/pinktea2023-eljones/>

International Women's Day Resource Package

<http://cuuwa.ca/news/iwd2023-resource-packet/>

Unitarian Women's Meditative Poetry Group [womens-meditative-poetry@googlegroups.com](mailto:womens-meditative-poetry@googlegroups.com) To join the emailing list, send an email to

[womens-meditative-poetry+subscribe@googlegroups.com](mailto:womens-meditative-poetry+subscribe@googlegroups.com)

or if this does not work, email Mary and ask to join at [unitarianmary@gmail.com](mailto:unitarianmary@gmail.com) They meet every Saturday at noon (Atlantic time) for fifteen minutes.

Feminist Film Group To join the emailing list, send a request to join at:

[unitarian-feminist-watch+subscribe@googlegroups.com](mailto:unitarian-feminist-watch+subscribe@googlegroups.com)

They meet every fourth Sunday at 7.30pm (Atlantic time).

CUUWA also has a Facebook page. You can find them under "Canadian UU Womens Association".

Contributed by  
Joan McFarland and  
Najat Abdou-McFarland

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## Grandchildren!

My grandson was visiting one day when he asked, "Grandma, do you know how you and God are alike?" I mentally polished my halo and I said, "No, how are we alike?". "You're both old", he replied.

A second grader came home from school and said to her grandmother, "Grandma, guess what? We learned how to make babies today." The grandmother, more than a little surprised, tried to keep her cool. "That's interesting," she said, "how do you make babies?" "It's simple", replied the little girl. "You just change 'y' to 'I' and add 'es'.

A little girl was diligently pounding away on her grandfather's word processor. She told him she was writing a story. "What's the story about?" he asked. "I don't know," she replied. "I can't read."

My young grandson called the other day to wish me Happy Birthday. He asked me how old I was, and I told him, 62. My grandson was quiet for a moment, and then he asked, "Did you start at 1?"

Submitted by  
Sheila Moore

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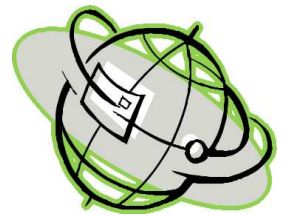


## Marjorie Butland

Greener Village Hall of Heroes  
February 2020

### Life was going well

Born the 15<sup>th</sup> of 16 children on a farm near Fundy National Park Marjorie Russeter, now 96 years old, learned how to work to put food on the table at an early age.



She completed grade 8 at a one room school house and then worked on the farm and local odd jobs until she married G. Edward Butland. The young couple moved to a house in West River near Alma.

Edward worked as a labourer for a home construction company. The boss would send a van to Alma and pick up workers and take them to Moncton or Saint John a week at a time. Edward learned carpentry on the job and studied on his own to achieve finish carpenter status.

When electric service came to West River several years later Edward wired their home and put in running water and a bathroom.

Over the next 19 years they had 6 children. The oldest daughter had just headed off to university and the second daughter would graduate high school and head to nursing school this year.

Then came that fateful Friday. Edward arrived home from Saint John, tilled the garden, then he and Marjorie spent several hours visiting with friends.

That night Edward died in bed.

### Left alone with no education and no job

Marjorie, now 42, was left with a house and 5 children ages 2-16 to care for.

She planted the garden so they could at least produce most of the food they would need.

Then she approached government for financial assistance. Eventually she qualified for \$90 per month in welfare but was told she would have to drain what little money the family still had in the bank before payments would start.

Marjorie knew she had to get educated and get a job.

## Getting Educated

Marjorie set out to upgrade her education. She enrolled in correspondence courses and took night classes.

A neighbour had just lost her husband also and Marjorie encouraged her to join her at the night classes. After 3 nights the other woman quit and ended up spending her life on welfare. Her children also ended up on welfare.

Next Marjorie met with Canada Manpower officials to seek support for further education toward a nursing career. In the end Marjorie entered Community College in Moncton and Manpower gave her \$90 per week plus a mileage allowance for her 90 mile daily round trip. By then, her welfare payments had ended.

Marjorie was then able to qualify for entry into a 12 month assistant nurse training program at Moncton Hospital. To pay for this final year of training Marjorie had to work enough hours at Fundy Park to qualify for employment insurance over the winter.

Everything worked out and Marjorie ended up graduating at the top of her class.

Over the course of this 3 year period, Marjorie took in her mother in law and a sister in law due to the loss of their husbands.

This certainly increased Marjorie's family responsibilities but it helped with the cooking and the in-laws babysat the kids during the long periods when she had to be away from home.

I asked Marjorie how she dealt with the stress she must have felt over those 3 years. She looked at me a little funny and said she didn't remember having that sort of feeling.

*"Figure out what you need to do and just do it!"* she said.

## Back on Her Feet

Marjorie got a job at the Albert County Hospital and resumed a more normal life.

During her struggle to get educated her youngest child had somehow managed to save \$50 to buy the bicycle he had seen in a Sears catalogue several years earlier.

Her children had evidently learned a lot from their hard working mother

All 6 of Marjorie's children ended up graduating high school and putting themselves through college or university. All 6 had successful careers.

Ken Little



## God's Intervention, A second chance for humankind

Kenneth B. Little and Helen Davis

It is not often these days that we read something positive about the world's future, so Ken's book (with suggestions and some help from Helen) is a positive and interesting read.

First, God is not an angry male in the clouds, but the "universal, intelligent, ever-growing life force" that keeps the world going in the right direction. The intervention is brought by the spirit of 40 million women's souls, "a counterbalance to the male energy that has dominated power structure... throughout human history". She has remarkable powers to communicate and transport, bringing world leaders together and setting up her own on-line site to reach more humans.

The first intervention is to bring death to anyone who enables or intends to kill another. The intended victim will survive. The book helps you imagine the huge consequences of this! The second intervention removes sexual desire before age eighteen and after age forty, also giving women the choice to become pregnant or not.

It takes time and trouble for the world to deal with these changes and Ken's account of the process shows serious research into what has already been achieved, the concerns of the countries and leaders involved and the places where meetings were likely to be held. The people involved and how their ideas develop and change are described in a way that can also involve the reader, with a focus on the U.S. that allows particular characters to be examined.

We end up with an Earth Council led jointly by former leaders of China and the U.S. Religions unite in the Church of Humankind. The goals are not all reached, but men, women and children are all involved, inequalities are addressed, religion changes, action is taken on global warming and space exploration.

There is a lot more to the book than I have been able to share here but I hope this gives you some indication of its value. Ken may still have some copies available or you can borrow mine.

Sheila Andrew



## That's Funny?

*"The most exciting phrase to hear in science, the one that heralds the most discoveries, is not 'Eureka!' (I found it!) but 'That's funny...'"*

- Isaac Asimov



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## Ramadan Mubarak!

As I write this the internet informs me that the crescent moon of Ramadan 2023 was sighted in Saudi Arabia on March 22<sup>nd</sup> making Thursday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> the first day of fasting. Wishing you a blessed Ramadan.



One of the Pillars of Islam is fasting during the month of Ramadan. The Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him, is said to have declared that one must see the new crescent moon to begin each month and that astronomical calculations were not allowed.

An interesting coincidence that this year the Christian Easter will fall in the middle of Ramadan. The two Abrahamic religions claim more than half the population of the world as adherents (Christianity at 31.3% and Islam, 24.9% 2020 projection by Pew Research) and are sharing the same time frame for their most holy observation. Peace be upon them all!

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## Happy Easter

To those of you who observe and celebrate, we wish you a blessed and holy Easter! **He** is risen!

The English word Easter, which parallels the German word Ostern, is of uncertain origin. One view, expounded by the Venerable Bede in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, was that it derived from Eostre, or Eostrae, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring and fertility. Of course that would explain all the eggs, baby chicks, rabbits and flowers. Most Wiccans celebrate Ostara, one of the eight Sabbats, at the Vernal Equinox

The Passion of Christ occurred during the Jewish Passover. Early followers of Christianity observed Good Friday and Easter Sunday during the Passover, however, in 325 CE the Council of Nicaea established that Easter would be held on the first Sunday after the first full moon occurring on or after the Vernal Equinox. The change in how Easter was calculated moved it from the Passover date, however, they are usually just a few days, but may be almost a month, apart.



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## Chag Pesach Samech

The Passover (Pesach) is celebrated from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> of Nissan, the first month in the Jewish calendar. This year, the Passover is from April 5<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> in the Gregorian calendar.



The first night of Pesach is usually the first full moon on or after the Vernal equinox. Passover celebrates the Exodus when the Jews were freed from slavery in Egypt and began their long trek to the Promised Land. On the first two nights of Passover, a Seder meal is eaten and the emphasis is on teaching the children the story of the Exodus using symbolic foods such as bitter herbs and matzah. The Last Supper of Jesus with his apostles was most certainly a Seder meal.

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## West Trust - A Century of Giving

Our fellowship lives on a very modest budget. So when we want to do something big we look for other sources of funding rather than just rely on our own members.



The West Family Home  
still standing on  
Brunswick St., Halifax

One of those sources which have been there to support us for many years is the West Trust Foundation. In the last decade the foundation has provided us with close to \$10,000 dollars in grants, free money which we don't have to pay back.

The foundation is based in Halifax and accounting services are provided by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Halifax (UUCH). The foundation has a long and interesting history of almost a century and a half.

A wealthy man named John Conrad West was one of the founding members of the Universalist Church in Halifax in 1837. John's sons also became wealthy and in 1881 his son William Pryor West died and left \$40,000 to his wife Louisa with the stipulation that when she died the money was to go to the Universalist church. William's brother Nathaniel West had also left the church \$28,000. For the 1800's these were very large sums.

Nine trustees were appointed to manage these funds and first began meeting in 1888. In keeping with West's wishes the funds were to go to promote "in the Dominion of Canada... the religious opinions held by the church known as Universalist."

Today, there are seven trustees managing the funds, with five trustees from the UUCH and two from Fredericton. Currently Joan McFarland and myself serve to represent UFF. When there were UU congregations in Saint John and Prince Edward Island they sent one member each to serve as trustees.

Originally the grants were distributed only to congregations in the Maritimes because there were no Universalist churches west of here. Today they are handed out to congregations all across Canada. And the mandate has expanded to include Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist churches.

The seven trustees meet once a year in October to review and decide which congregations will get grants.

Recent West Trust grants to UFF	
2016	\$2,390 New Lawn Sign and Banner
2019	\$1,700 to Hire a Bookkeeper
2021	\$1,500 Energy Retrofit
2022	\$2,800 Upgrade the Website

Kudos goes to the people who have managed the investment over the years and kept it going for 144 years. In years past some larger grants were available. However in recent years the foundation investments have been diminished by downturns in the markets, such as the massive hit that affected many organizations and individuals in 2008. The market value of the funds as of 2020 was \$282,777. Only 2.5 per cent of the earnings are used to pay out in grants. So in 2022 there was \$7,750 for dispersal and six applications. The previous year, 2021, was unusual. Because no grants were given in the Covid year of 2020, in 2021 we had \$14,800 in funds and gave out 12 grants, ranging from \$500 to \$1,500.

The objectives of the foundation are to affirm and promote the seven UU principles. Suggested ways to do this are through publications, books, pamphlets, videos, websites and today social media. Funds can be used for employing ministers and lay clergy and religious educators, assisting small and struggling congregations or help in starting up

new ones and various means of extending the reach of UUism. Often grants are used for ways of growing congregations and attracting new members.

When I was first elected as trustee in 2015 the October meeting was held at Mount Allison University in Sackville. Then the Saint John and PEI congregations shut down and a decision was made to meet in Halifax. The two Fredericton trustees have the option to meet by Zoom.

Serving on this foundation has been a pleasant experience. What could be more joyful than giving away money? Especially when it is not your own money. I also enjoy meeting the other trustees and getting to know people from the Halifax congregation.

Reviewing the applications you also learn a lot about what UU congregations are doing all across Canada and the many and varied ways in which they serve their congregations, address issues of growth, try to be more inclusive and provide inspiring programs and services.

Some of the interesting projects funded by the trust: During Covid a lot of congregations were seeking funds, as were we, to upgrade their technology so they could offer hybrid Sunday services and other on line programming. Funds were sought to develop programming in racism, training about LGBTQ communities, and Truth Healing and Reconciliation programming. One church in Quebec wanted to begin a once a month Sunday service in French. A lot of applications are for addressing aging buildings and aging memberships. Many congregations try to be innovative in attracting new and younger members.

If anyone is interested in serving as a trustee for West Trust please get in touch with our board. A trustee must be approved first by our board and then the board in Halifax.

*Submitted by Glenna Hanley*

*Thanks to Heather Watts, archivist at UUCH, for help with the history and origins of the foundation*

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