



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

Newsletter editor: 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.

December 31st Carlos Gomes will lead us in a talking circle

January 7th Let’s Endorse the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative..

Service Leader: Janet Crawford

Joan McFarland, co-chair of the Social Responsibility Committee, will share a video of an inspiring talk by Claudia Campero of Mexico about the global Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative. At the February UFF budget meeting, the Social Responsibility Committee will be putting forward a motion for UFF to become one of the over 2000 endorsers of the Initiative.

January 14th

Speaker: Anne Marie Hartford

Service Leader: Janet Crawford

Anne Marie has been offering Death Cafes in the Fredericton area since 2016. The service will be in the form of a Death Café.

A Death Café is a gathering of adults to talk about death and dying in a safe, supportive, respectful, and confidential space. At a Death Café there is no agenda and no experts. We meet simply as people who are going to die and want to sort out our thoughts and feeling about it. There is no course of action, product or service promoted at a Death Café. Death Cafés are open to, and respectful of, people from all communities and belief systems.

A Death Café is not a bereavement support group or grief counselling. Jon Underwood, London, England, developed the Death Café model in 2010 and since then these gatherings have spread across Europe, North America, and Australia. Death Cafés are “not-for-profit” and not associated with any other organization. A free will donation is collected to cover the direct costs. In Fredericton the first Death Café was offered in 2016. Since then, many Death Cafés have been held around the city.

January 21st Community Kitchen School Lunch Initiatives

Speaker: Cassandra LeBlanc

Service Leader: Janet Crawford

Cassandra LeBlanc is executive director of the Fredericton Community Kitchens. It has grown since its start 40 years ago to serve three meals a day, hundreds of school lunches and many other food programs.

January 28th Whether English or Wither English
Speaker: Tony Fitzgerald

Speculations on English as a Lingua Franca and evolutions in the language which might make it more suitable for the role. Tony still remembers a conversation with one of his sons’ teachers in which she confessed that they no longer taught grammar, expecting students to somehow absorb it by exposure to great literature. One can understand why grammar schools are no longer called that and just look at social media to see how it has turned out.

February 4th Acceptance

Speaker: Janet Crawford

This will be an interactive service where we talk about what we should or can accept and what we can change, in the world or in ourselves.



Mitten Hedge and Food Bank donation opportunities

for January to May 2024

The Social Responsibility Committee has two boxes at the Fellowship ready for your donations: one for the winter months and another that will continue into the spring. We encourage anyone coming to the building to make a regular contribution to one or both donation boxes. THANK YOU

We will continue to collect **socks, mittens and hats** for the Lieutenant Governor’s hats on the hedge initiative at Government House. You may leave new or gently used socks, mittens and hats in the box in the foyer at 874 York Street. The SRC will clear the box frequently to make a delivery to Government House.

There is also a box in the foyer for your donations to the Greener Village food bank. Donations such as **jars/tins of pasta sauce, cans of tuna, salmon, or ham, fruit and vegetables, boxes of pasta and peanut-free snacks** for children’s school lunches are welcomed. A member of the committee will take the food to Greener Village whenever the box is full.

With gratitude, the Social Responsibility Committee:
Joan, Robin, Helen, Jane and Janet



Economic Slavery

In most of the world, outright slavery has largely been eliminated. Unfortunately, most of the world’s people are economic slaves.

In the poorest regions of the world, wage rates are extremely low, and most people are forced to work very long hours to earn subsistence wages. The wealthier nations benefit from the products and services these distant “slaves” supply without having to actually go through the messy process of kidnapping the unfortunates and bringing them to work camps in their home countries.

Even in the developed world, economic slavery abounds.

Money begets money. People with family wealth tend to get better education and this opens the doors to jobs with power and influence. These fortunate individuals also have more ready access to money to invest in new businesses.

The leaders of large corporations can earn more than 400 times the average earnings of other employees.

Sports and entertainment celebrities can earn as much or more than many corporate leaders.

Authoritarian political leaders plunder even greater sums in some cases.

Throughout the world, mega cities have been created to house our surging population. Because land is limited in these cities, the cost of living is becoming so high that citizens that would normally be classified as middle class can barely afford to buy or even rent accommodations. Low-income earners have to work multiple jobs and share accommodations to squeak by.



These trends are stressing many societies to an incendiary level.

We’re better than that.

Kenneth B. Little

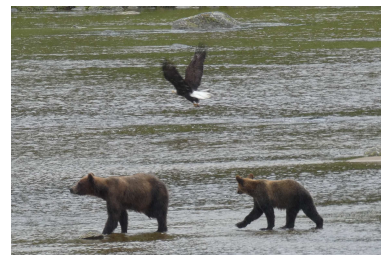


WhaleCoast Alaska 2024



Experience a unique and awe-inspiring UU Alaska tour!

- National Parks Tour - June 15-25,2024 \$4,050
- All-Alaska Tour - July 19-31,2024 \$5,005
- *Optional 2 day extension to Anan Bear Observatory and Wrangell



Our 30th Year!

- Whales, bear, moose, caribou, and eagles
- Native Alaskan culture
- Alaska’s finest museums and attractions
- Spectacular travel on the Alaska Railroad
- Alaska UU homestays and dinner parties
- Hiking, canoeing, kayaking, and rafting options

Website: whalecoastak.org

Tour Director: Maya Kaup, Anchorage UU and Alaska travel enthusiast

Email: whalecoastak@gmail.com

Hurry! Each tour sells out when 40 guests register



Unitarian Women's Potluck Gathering

Women's potluck Friday, January 19th 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. If you don't have time to make something, come anyway and we will share.

Topic: Relativity: Who are the people you call relatives? Are there many or few? Did you connect with them during the Holidays?

For more Information contact

Joan Brewer
506-455-5169



A Different Christmas Story

Not that the Muslim sacred book calls it Christmas, but the Koran does have an interesting version of the story. "And mention in the book Mary, when she withdrew from her people to an eastern place, and she took a veil apart from them. Then We sent unto her Our Spirit that presented to her a man without fault. She said "I take refuge in the All-merciful from thee! If thou fearest God... He said "I am but a messenger come from thy Lord to give thee a son." She said "How shall I have a son whom no mortal has touched, neither have I been unchaste? He said "Even so thy Lord has said "Easy is that for Me: and that We may appoint him a sign unto men and a mercy from Us. It is a thing decreed." So she conceived him and withdrew with him to a distant place. And the birth pangs surprised her by the trunk of a palm tree. She said "Would I had died ere this and become a thing forgotten." But the one that was below her called to her, "Nay do not sorrow; see thy Lord has set below thee a rivulet. Shake also the palm trunk and there shall come tumbling upon thee dates fresh and ripe. Eat therefore and drink and be comforted and if thou shouldst see any mortal say "I have vowed to the All-merciful a fast and today I will not speak to any man."

Then she brought the child to her folk, carrying him and they said "Mary thou hast surely committed a monstrous thing! Sister of Aaron, thy father was not a wicked man, nor was thy mother a woman unchaste." Mary pointed to the child then, but they said, "How shall we speak to one who is still in the cradle, a little child?"

He said "Lo I am God's servant. God has given me the Book and made me a Prophet. Blessed He has made me, wherever I may be and he has enjoined me to pray and

to give alms as long as I shall live and likewise to cherish my mother. He has not made me arrogant, unprosperous. Peace be upon me the day that I was born and the day I die and the day I am raised up alive!"

That is Jesus, son of Mary, in word of truth concerning which they are doubting. It is not for God to take a son unto him. Glory be to him! When he, decrees a thing, He but says it to "Be" and it is. Surely God is my Lord and your Lord, so serve you him. This is a straight path."

Translation by A.J. Arberry 1955
In *The Koran Interpreted*
Happy New Year to All
Sheila Andrew



Notes from the Board

Happy New Year from your Board of Directors

Dear members of the congregation and friends of the fellowship we hope your Christmas was pleasant and we wish you joy and peace in the new year.

Although the board took a wee break and did not have a regular meeting in December things were not quiet around the place.

Shortly before Christmas we got a call from our long time member Linda Sprague looking for some help on behalf of her daughter Ashley. Ashley is working with a company that helps settle newcomers to our area. In this instance Ashley was assigned to help some nurses and their families arriving from the Philippines to work in our health care system and in long term care.

For some reason some nurses were arriving much earlier than expected and accommodations were needed in the short term until apartments could be secured for them to live in.

Linda asked on behalf of her daughter if they could stay at the fellowship. Without consulting with the full board (hope no one minds) I made the executive decision to say yes to this request. In very short order make shift beds were assembled and essential items collected in time for the arrival of the families on Saturday, Dec. 30.

While I think Ashley was initially looking for space for three to four families as word got out that apartments were needed two and possibly three apartments were found. In the end we are hosting one family of four, mom, dad, a six- year- old and a 10-month old baby. They have an apartment that will be available Feb 1.

The family will be using our children's room upstairs and possibly the board room and will use the kitchen for preparing meals.

While they are here we ask everyone to avoid going up-

stairs and please use only the washroom on the main floor. And if you encounter them please say hello and make them feel welcome.

If you want to help out with their household or personal needs please contact Ashley to find out what is needed. Her email is: ashleyjsprague@gmail.com

Other events not so pleasant. During the horrendous wind and rain storm of Dec. 18 large sections of shingles were blown off our roof. Thanks to the building committee, mainly the co-chairs Tracy Gleim and Tessa Walsh for looking after that and getting some tarps up for protection. And thanks to Treasurer Heather Lunergan for checking on insurance coverage.

We will have more to report on that later.

Also on that Monday we had flooding in the south east corner of the basement with water appearing to come up through a drain hole in the bomb shelter. For those who didn't know, this building came equipped with a concrete

bomb shelter. If you were a kid in the late 1950s and early 1960s (as I was) that was a thing. A lot of attention was paid to nuclear attacks and what precautions to take. This was, of course, less than a decade after WW II. and the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Again thanks to B and G committee members Tessa and Ken Moore, and a friend of Tessa's for cleaning up the water. There will be more discussion at the board level on this event also.

And finally committee chairs, the treasurer and board members have begun working on a budget for 2024. The board will sit down with a draft budget at a meeting on Jan 21 and prepare the final product to present to the congregation at our annual budget meeting Feb. 11. So mark your calendars and plan to attend. Start time is 11:45 am.

Happy 2024!

Submitted by Glenna Hanley

President of the Board of Directors

This space wants your material!
Please send articles to touchstone@uff.ca