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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.

January 28th Whether English or Wither English

Speaker: Tony Fitzgerald

Tech Support Myron Hedderson

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

Speaker: Anne Marie Hartford

Service Leader: Janet Crawford

Tech Support Tony Fitzgerald

Anne Marie has been offering Death Cafes in the Fred-

erickton 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.

Note: Service originally scheduled for Jan 14.

February 11th The Meaning of Life Part 3

Speaker: Ken Little

Service Leader: Janet Crawford

Tech Support Tony Fitzgerald

Ken will present the last in his three part series on “The Meaning of Life” Ken describes his talk: After much deliberation, and thanks to Maslow’s dying revelation and the many heart-warming experiences I have had since I joined the Fellowship, I have finally been able to conclude my search for meaning in life. I will be presenting my conclusions on February 11th and I hope you are able to join us.

The answers are inside each of us but the true meaning for me comes from you.

February 18th Poetry

Speaker: Jo-Anne Elder

Service Leader: Jo-Anne Elder

Jo-Anne is a published poet and also an award winning translator. Jo-Anne Elder will offer some reflections on meditative poetry and writing as a spiritual practice.

February 25th Sharing Our Faith

Speaker: Glenna Hanley

Service Leader: Glenna Hanley

This is a Sunday when we are reminded that we share

this religion with many other Canadians. And all across the country Unitarian Universalist congregations will be holding a service like this, most of them also in February. One of the ways we acknowledge our fellow UUs is by donating to the Sharing Our Faith grant program which lends support to a myriad of programs and projects. Please donate as you are willing and able.

March 3rd Walking the Via Francigena

Speaker: Al Knowlton

Service Leader: Janet Crawford

In 2018 Al walked the Italian section of the Via Francigena pilgrim route from just inside the Italian/Swiss border to Rome. It was about 1200km and took me 53 days. This was my third pilgrimage. In 2020 during the pandemic I wrote a book about this experience called "A Roma Vado-To Rome I Go". My presentation will include a slide show and readings from my book. My focus will be to give the audience a sense of what it was like to do this pilgrimage which for me was a spiritual not religious experience.



“New U” Program 2024

The Membership Committee is planning a 3-part program for those who are new attendees to our Fellowship and for those who are interested in hearing some Unitarian history.

The first session will be an opportunity to share a bit about ourselves, our religious backgrounds and how we found ourselves at the Unitarian Fellowship.

In the second session we will discuss the history of Unitarianism and Universalism and talk about our own Fellowship and how it is structured.

Session 3 will be a wrap up.

Dates: Saturdays Feb. 10th, 17th, and 24th 1:30 – 2:30

Please contact Sheila Moore if you would like to attend

(506) 450-9021
smoore@nbnet.nb.ca



Notes from the Board

January’s board meeting was dominated by the budget process and preparing a budget for 2024.

Subject to verification by treasurer Heather Lunergan it looks as though 2023 was a very good year with an estimated surplus of \$7,903.03.

A big thank you goes to our members and some friends who so generously donated last year to the tune of \$24,266.

And also to our two lay chaplains, Jenn Carpenter-Gleim and Decima Mitchell, whose service fees, mostly from the weddings they performed, added another \$1,580 to our coffers.

The board reviewed the 2024 budget, still a draft at this point until it is approved by the congregation at the annual budget meeting on Feb 11. Heather will make some adjustments and present her budget to the meeting on the 11th.

I would encourage members to attend this meeting and please don’t leave us hanging. Because without a quorum we cannot pass the budget. This is also an opportunity for members to learn where their money goes.

At that meeting you will also be asked to vote on a proposal from our Social Responsibility Committee to endorse a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative. Joan McFarland, co-chair of Social Responsibility, gave a presentation on this global treaty at a Sunday service Jan. 7.

Submitted by Glenna Hanley
President of the Board of Directors



A note from your Treasurer

Happy New Year!

Thank you, all members and friends of our congregation, for your continued financial support of our Unitarian Fellowship. As we say, Thank you for your time, talents, and treasures. And an aside, tax receipts for the fiscal 2023 will be arriving by email on or around Feb. 25.

Please, if you have changed addresses, or name, or wish your receipt to be mailed instead, contact me at Treasurer@uff.ca Revenue Canada requires a full address, postal code, phone number and email ... I will be in touch if I don’t have any of these asap. Now for my annual message to our members, friends, and donors.

Your time is incalculable and invaluable, as well as freely given, over and over. Whether it is serving on a committee, providing hospitality on Sunday, jumping in to help newcomers, visiting a friend, standing strong against hate and injustice. We are a gracious bunch!

Your talents! We have members and friends who can transform our building into a festive holiday, or prepare delicious food for a Harvest Fest, complete with entertainment that makes us laugh, or cry, or just think. We have speakers who empower us with their wisdom and service leaders who evoke a feeling of sanctuary and peace. We are a talented bunch!

And you share our treasures. Every year, we have a Stewardship Campaign, where we ask members to ‘promise’ to support our congregation, our building, our social and in-house events. And every year, those ‘pledges’ are given

and honoured. In the three years I have served as Treasurer, not one penny less than the proposed givings has been missed. Indeed, many give beyond their promise, putting something 'in the basket' on Sunday. We are a generous bunch!

We also are blessed to have donations from past members, friends and from special events like the Harvest Supper. Last year, they totalled just under \$1000. All of that helps our bank balance.

And once a Year, this year on Sunday Feb. 11, we get together for our annual Budget Meeting. This is a vital piece of financial business that is properly approved by our members. The Treasurer will have paper copies of the budget ... and an e-copy will be sent a few days prior to the meeting. Please make sure you come, or send in your proxy - we need a quorum. And we need everyone to see, discuss, and applaud our financial well-being. We are a mighty strong bunch!

Heather Lunergan
UFF Treasurer



Position Possibly Available: Lay Chaplain

At this time, the UFF has two Lay Chaplains. They have found, at times, that they are both busy and have to turn away couples who have expressed interest in what the CUC Lay Chaplaincy program can accommodate. The CUC highly recommends that we have the ability to provide some back up capability in case the chosen officiant is incapacitated or otherwise unable at short notice to perform the service. The Congregational Lay Chaplaincy Committee has decided to petition the CUC Lay Chaplaincy Committee for permission to appoint a third Lay Chaplain for our Fellowship. We believe that there is a good possibility this will be approved, however, in the interim we think we should start the process.

The CUC LCC informs me that if there is sufficient interest there will be Basic Training for Lay Chaplains at the end of February. If you are at all interested, it might be a good idea to take this training. If you are seriously interested, the Fellowship may be able to subsidize the training costs. Speak to me for details.

Even should the CUC decline our request for the third Lay Chaplain, there will be an opening in a couple of years when either one of our current Lay Chaplains decide to retire or reach the maximum of possible extensions to their tenure.

Interested persons might wish to consult the most recent version of the Lay Chaplaincy Program Manual which, as I write this, may be found at:

<https://cuc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2020-Lay-Chaplaincy-Program-Manual-April-1.pdf>

If you are still interested, any of the current and, I would think, previous Lay Chaplains would be more than willing to answer any questions you might still have, again, in complete confidence.

For now, please express your interest in the position by forwarding, in confidence, your Curriculum Vitae or Resumé with cover letter briefly describing why you wish to fill the position and highlighting the skills that you would bring to the position to either:

Chair.LayChaplaincy@UFF.ca

or

Chair, Lay Chaplaincy Committee
874 York St.
Fredericton, NB, E3B 3R8

In the meantime, the Lay Chaplaincy committee has much work to do. We have to present a case to the CUC to justify a third Lay Chaplain. If that is successful, we have to strike a working committee to review applications, conduct and review interviews with the applicants, submit a recommendation to the Board for their review then present the recommendation to the congregation at a general meeting for your approval. If you see me approaching you in the next little while, please don't run. The working committee will need members of the congregation who are not actively involved in the Lay Chaplaincy as well as one of the Lay Chaplains and, probably, yours truly.

Tony Fitzgerald
Chair, Lay Chaplaincy Committee



Caring Circle

Joys, Sorrows, Concerns

Our thoughts are with Deby Nash who was back in Fredericton January 22nd after surgery in Halifax for a return of mouth cancer. Thank you Tracy Gleim for going to Halifax to drive Deby home. Deby does kidney dialysis in her apartment but needed to drive to and from the Saint John Regional Hospital on January 23rd for an appointment in the nephrology department. She will need to travel to Saint John again soon.

Our thoughts are also with Heather Lunergan who is hibernating to keep a bad lung infection from getting worse.

Joan Brewer has recovered from successful foot surgery.

A few members of our fellowship have recovered after being sick with Covid virus.

Many thanks to Linda Sprague and Ashley Sprague for the wonderful work with our friends from the Philippines. It is a pleasure to meet them at the fellowship.

The Caring Circle is here for you. Let us know if we can help in any way - with a phone call, a visit, a drive, or delivery. Contact Robin Stanley stanleyr@nb.sympatico.ca or (506) 650-2670 OR Janet Crawford janetcr@gmail.com or (506) 454-0441. Other members of our committee are Haifa Miller, Sheila Moore, Lorna Drew, and Nancy Beltrandi.

If you can help with giving drives to appointments or Sunday services or with deliveries of food or flowers, etc, please let us know.

The Caring Circle has a Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/247416469728195>

Submitted by
Robin Stanley
Co-chair, Social Responsibility



Is The Crown At War With Us?

Join the Social Responsibility Committee to watch Wabanaki filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin's documentary *Is The Crown At War With Us?*. Learn more about the history of Wabanaki peoples' assertion of their treaty right to harvest, and make a living from, the resources in their territories.



February 15th, 6:30 to 8:15, 874 York St.

"In this feature-length documentary by Alanis Obomsawin, it's the summer of 2000 and the country watches in disbelief as federal fisheries wage war on the Mi'kmaq fishermen of Burnt Church, New Brunswick. Why would officials of the Canadian government attack citizens for exercising rights that had been affirmed by the highest court in the land? Casting her cinematic and intellectual nets into history to provide context, Obomsawin delineates the complex roots of the conflict with passion and clarity, building a persuasive defence of the Mi'kmaq position." National Film Board

Submitted by
Robin Stanley
Co-chair, Social Responsibility



Unitarian Women's Potluck Gathering

Women's potluck Friday, February 16th 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



Why Did God Create Atheists?

There is a famous story told in Hasidic literature that addresses this very question. The Master teaches the student that God created everything in the world to be appreciated, since everything is here to teach us a lesson. One clever student asks "What lesson can we learn from atheists? Why did God create them?"

The Master responds "God created atheists to teach us the most important lesson of them all — the lesson of true compassion. You see, when an atheist performs an act of charity, visits someone who is sick, helps someone in need, and cares for the world, they are not doing so because of some religious teaching. They do not believe that god commanded them to perform this act. In fact, they do not believe in God at all, so their acts are based on an inner sense of morality. And look at the kindness they can bestow upon others simply because they feel it to be right."

"This means," the Master continued "that when someone reaches out to you for help, you should never say 'I pray that God will help you.' Instead, for the moment, you should become an atheist, imagine that there is no God who can help, and say 'I will help you.'" If there is redemption in religion, I believe it is when people come to understand this story.

Based on a lesson
by Rabbi Moshe Leib
as told in Martin Buber's
Tales of the Hasidim



The Reason You Walk

Wab Kinew

Kinew recently became the Premier of Manitoba, the first Indigenous premier in Canada. This book describes his father's journey from life in the countryside with his family to the pains and losses of residential school life and the gradual recovery as he found his language and culture again and sought to share and build it in the Anishnabe community and beyond. His anger pushed him to work with the Great Lakes Indigenous, to teach at the University of Minnesota and to go into politics. He worked with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and was presented to the Pope and P.M. Stephen Harper when they apologized for the schools. However it took a long time to recover a warm and loving relationship with Wab. The cold severity experienced in the residential schools meant that many survivors lost this ability and their children found it hard to develop. His father's recovery enabled Wab to respond in the same way to his own family.

Wab's difficult journey went from private high school to a wild journey through a hip hop band life with alcoholism,

racism, uncertainty about his own identity and jail time for violence. Before their marriage failed, his parents were able to help him straighten out as he was sent to their custody. He was able to find jobs in the band office and community development. With a degree in economics from the University of Manitoba he went on to work in journalism, broadcasting and eventually politics.

It is a pleasure to learn how much of the Anishnabe culture and beliefs survived and Kinew gives a lot of interesting information on this. Dances, ceremonies, name changes and life changes are all observed as part of the reason to walk. Even pain is inflicted from pegs in the skin pulled out while dragging something in a run to adapt the mind and body for change. All these are part of the journey.

Reconciliation with the Catholic Church is also achieved. Kinew recognizes common beliefs in the Creator even if the formats differ. The Creator told the Anishnabe "I am the reason you walk." Teachings on how to love others are also shared now that all races are included. Ndebe, as Wab's father is known during this stage of his life, even takes part in a ceremony adopting a Catholic Archbishop friend as an indigenous brother.

If anyone wants to borrow my copy just let me know.

Sheila Andrew

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