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Sunday Service 11 a.m.

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Sunday Services

December 1 *Why the Peace Talks will fail* Jack Gegenberg will situate the discussion in a review of Zionist agenda(s) around war and peace.

December 8 *Islamophobia* Dr. Sylvia Hale.

December 15 *Carolyn McDade and "Spirit of Life"* Heather Lunergan will speak. One of the best known "songs" within UUism is "Spirit of Life." I will explore the music and activism of author Carolyn McDade, who "describes herself simply as a woman of faith seeking with others to touch what matters."

December 22 *Children's Christmas Program* Intergenerational.

December 29 *Community Food Centre* Vadini Mahabir, Volunteer Coordinator: A Greener Village Community Food Centre. will speak about A Greener Village transitioning from Food Bank to Community Food Centre. This talk will explain why that transition is necessary. Issues of food security and building sustainable communities will be dealt with.

Fall Campaign

November has been the traditional month during which we talk openly about the need for money. You should be receiving a letter shortly with a form to allow you to indicate a pledge for the coming year. If you do not receive such a letter, please bring it to the attention of the Finances Committee so that we may correct our records.

There will be a campaign wrap up dinner at 6pm on Thursday, December 5th, so please come and help us celebrate a successful campaign. We will have draws for allegedly valuable prizes for people who have returned their pledge sheets and post-dated cheques or other arrangements for payment.

Tony Fitzgerald

VP Finances and Facilities

Hospitality Committee Update

As of November 24, 2013, I have agreed to take over chairing the Hospitality Committee for the remainder of the board year until June 30, 2014. I need volunteers to prepare coffee and baked goods for Sunday services. Last year I ran an 8 week rotation which worked really well. Some weeks are already covered for the next few months though, so I will keep those weeks as they are and just fill in volunteers where needed. Please email me at heidiod@rogers.com or call me at 206-4011 to sign up. I will also send out an email to last year's volunteers to see who is willing and able to do it again.

Thank you!!
Heidi

Youth Group: December Update

In November, members of our Youth Group had an opportunity to volunteer with the Boys' and Girls' Club at the Skyline Acres site. We were asked to help with Jumpstart, an early-evening program for elementary school students.

We took part in different games and sports along with the program leader and another volunteer. They appreciated us so much that they have asked us to come back when the program resumes in January.

Some of our youth are finding it difficult to attend on Sunday mornings, and since December is a busy time we have not scheduled any meetings. However, we do plan to get together soon for some fun activities (we're thinking about bowling, pizza night, etc.).

Remember that we are happy to have you with us whenever you can come, and would also welcome your friends or visitors to the UFF. For volunteer and social activities, it's good to let me know ahead of time in case we need permission slips, need to register or reserve, and so on. We're flexible, though, so if someone shows up at the last minute we'll make it work.

If you haven't already done so, please join our Facebook group to find out about upcoming activities:

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

You can contact me any time at eldergomes@yahoo.com.

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes



BBC Podcasts

If people want free lessons on philosophy and religion and a lot of other interesting topics they can listen for free if they google "In our Time BBC Radio 4" to listen in.

Malcolm Miller



Howard's Squirrels

Note: for those who have read Lorna and Leo's wonderful book on their trip through Alzheimers, this story goes with page 91.

My father, Howard, was a true pan-theist, in that he found "god" in nature. He instilled a love of nature, more an awe of nature, in all three of his kids, but I was much closer to him than the others. We would go for long walks in the woods and he would teach me bird calls, and show me various mosses and lichens.. He could tell the weather by looking at the clouds. And he loved to feed the three squirrels that lived in his yard. He would actually put peanut butter on crackers and hand-feed them at the front door. They would come up on the porch and wait for him to come out.

About a year before he died, 5 years after the doctors

called his dementia "Alzheimers," and 9 months before he went to York Manor, Howard developed unreasonable fears. He would not go outside if there were clouds in the sky. He seemed to think they would hurt him. And he cringed when he saw the squirrels. He didn't say why, but it was obvious that he was afraid of them. These were the worst effects of the Alzheimer's, in my mind, because they reinforced that fact that this man was not longer really "Dad" or "Howard." The squirrels continued to come to the house even after Howard went to York Manor. My mother refused to feed them, so one of us would do it when we were there. Patient squirrels!

Howard had his whole family with him the last week of his life. Even Jennifer came from Toronto and she did a great job by staying with her grandmother on Bloor Street. It was only knowing that Jenn was there and had a car (lent by an uncle) that Mom would go home to sleep. We promised she would be brought to York Manor when necessary.

It was Jennifer who noticed the squirrels had gone away. That was strange, because with so many people coming and going from the house, they would have been well-fed. But they just left about a week before Howard died.

We all spent the week at York Manor and it was really lovely. Sounds funny to say that, but even though Howard was not communicating, he let us know he understood we were there. When he died, my mother, sister and I were physically touching him. We joked that because Howard loved the sun he would not die under a cloudy sky and that week was dreary and rainy. The sun came out around 6:30 pm and Howard died just after 8 pm on Saturday, May 8, the day before my brother's birthday. When Jeffrey, who was only 11, came back to York Manor with his father, Cheryl told him that "Grampy just took the last cloud to Heaven."

We got through the next days, and everyone was busy. The funeral was in Nashwaaksis but we then went to Hartland, where Howard's ashes were put in the family plot. We came back to Fredericton in several cars and Jennifer and I had my mother with us. As we drove into the yard at about 5 pm, there, on the front porch, were all 3 of "Howard's squirrels."

Heather Lunergan



Items from CUC Newsletter

Editor's note: I can forward, electronically, additional information for anyone interested

Wanted: Committed, Passionate UUs from the Central and Eastern Regions.

Two individuals are being sought to serve on the CUCs

Board of Trustees beginning in May 2014, one in the Central region and one in the Eastern region.

CUC Board members are elected for three-year terms, with a maximum of two consecutive terms. The CUC Board is a Carver policy board, which means that it sets policies, larger picture visions and long-term program goals, which are then the responsibility of the Executive Director to interpret and enact.

Got Youth? The YOB (Youth Observer to the Board) will be elected through an online voting process starting Feb 1st 2014. The YOB brings a youth voice to the CUC Board table and fully participates in discussion that affects national decisions. Please ensure any youth connected to your congregation, (as well as your youth advisors and religious educators) get this information and are in touch with Ariel Hunt-Brondwin ariel@cuc.ca or Elena Basford yob@cuc.ca so that they get to vote – or perhaps even run – for this important position.



Light Is Returning

Heather Lunergan suggests the following lyrics by Charlie Murphy, from the 1970s album, “Canticles of Light” for your consideration.

Editor’s note: Those of us who have joined Moon Joyce when we greet the Solstice sunrise on the banks of the St. John river will recognize the chant as one that we usually perform. Like most chants, the verses are repeated with rising intensity until things just “seem right”. If you have Internet access, use a web browser and your favourite search engine to search for the combined title, author and album and you should be able to find a “You Tube” performance of the chant.

Light is returning
even though this is the darkest hour
no one can hold
back the dawn

Let’s keep it burning
let’s keep the sacred fire alive
make safe our journey
through the storm

One planet is turning
circling a path around the sun
earth mother is calling
Her children home



Creating a Board Covenant

A committee of the Board is working on a covenant to guide its work together. This covenant is intended to frame a standard of conduct for the interactions and relationships among Board members, and may form the basis for a congregational covenant which could be created at a later date.

UUs affirm the worth and dignity of individuals, recognize the importance of compassion in human relations, and seek to encourage the search for meaning and spiritual growth of others. However, differences in the values, viewpoint, or vision of members of congregations can lead to divisiveness and unhealthy relationships. In the past year, our own congregation has faced a heart-breaking situation, and we hope this will be a step towards healing the pain and preventing further entrenchment in conflict.

Developing a covenant is an important step in clarifying expectations and creating a safe environment in a community. “Covenant” is Latin for “come together” and, in this context, means an agreement among members of the congregation on a course of action or a set of behaviours. A covenant affirms the commitment of a group to engage in “right relationships” with each other. Jim Wind, President of the Alban Institute, has described “right relationships” as “healthy, life-giving, respectful, loving, and open relationships with one another.” Bringing our best selves and aspiring to right relationships with all who are part of our community may seem to be a lofty ideal, and covenants are most successful when reasonable expectations are provided in clear, direct language. According to Eunice Benton and Connie Goodbread, consultants with the UUA, a congregational covenant can be described simply as a promise to make “respectful behaviour the norm” or even a statement of what “good manners” look like in a group of people.

Benton suggests that the first step to implementing a congregation-wide covenant is for leaders to implement a covenant. Board members and congregational leaders have to understand, practise and model covenantal behaviour in their dealings with each other, their decision-making, and their volunteer service in order to lead by example. After the congregational leadership has committed to and worked with a covenant for a while, the rest of the congregation can participate in the creation of a covenant. The UUA and the CUC have resources on creating covenants and examples of covenants which UU congregations in Canada and in the U.S. Admittedly, the process of creating a covenant can be time-consuming and complex, but it is a valuable investment in the kind of community we seek.

May we all be held in light.
Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes



Women's Pot Luck

The women's pot luck for the month of December is being postponed until Friday, January 3, 2014. Deby Nash will host the gathering at her home. We will gather at 6 PM and eat at 6:30 PM. Topic for discussion will be distributed at a later time. For further information contact Joan Brewer at 455-5169 or jebrewer@rogers.com



CUC ACM 2014

Start making plans to attend the CUC Annual Conference and Meeting in Montreal, May 16 - 18, 2014.

"Building Beloved CommUUnities: Sacred Spaces Beyond Walls"

ACM 2014 will build on 2013's theme of "Diversity: Creating A Shared Understanding." Expanding from Rev. Shawn Newton's Confluence Lecture (*The Risks of Relevance*) and Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed's Keynote address (*Radical Inclusion*), ACM 2014 will take us into an exploration of how we expand our UU community beyond congregational walls, how we remain relevant into the future, and being radically inclusive.

Hosted by the Unitarian Church of Montreal, the ACM will be held at the Sheraton Montreal Airport Hotel. While the hotel is some distance from downtown Montreal, it is close to the airport and offers a cost-effective site for the ACM.

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday, May 16, 2014, preceded by the Resolutions Plenary on Thursday evening, May 15.

Registration for the ACM will open in January 2014.

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