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Sunday Service 11 a.m.

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Contents for February 2017

Sunday Services	1
Women's Monthly Pot Luck	1
Monthly Theme	1
Potato Leek Soup Recipe	2
Notes from the President	2
Upcoming Themes	3
Book Review	3
Thanks	4

March Theme: *Simplicity and Abundance*

March 5 International Women's Day. Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes and Anneke Elder-Gomes will lead this year's Canadian Unitarian Universalist Women's Association Service, which they have been involved in preparing. The 2017 theme is: "It's Simple: We Need Change Now."

Sunday Services

January Theme: *Creation and Stories*

January 29 Speaker: Dorothy Diamond. Service Leader: Joan McFarland.

In the summer of 2016, Dorothy Diamond, a mother and a grandmother, took a four day hike along the Dobson Trail from Moncton to Fundy National Park. She was alone and carrying everything that she needed on her back. This did not include a tent.

With our January theme of 'stories', Dorothy is going to share with us the story of her hike: how she did it, why she did it and what it meant to her, especially in a spiritual sense.

February Theme: *Love and Justice*

February 5 Interactive Multigenerational Theme Service. Service Co-ordinator: Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes. Children, youth, and adults are invited to explore the theme of Love and Justice in creative and active ways.

February 12 Sharing Our Faith Service. Service Leader: Heather Lunergan. Please see the article on the monthly theme for more information about this annual CUC service.

February 19 tbd

February 26 tbd

Women's Monthly Pot Luck

The next Unitarian Fellowship women's pot luck will be held Friday, February 24th. Joan Brewer will host the gathering at her home, 31 Ridgewell Place. We gather at 6 PM and eat at 6:30 PM. The topic for will be circulated later. For further information, contact Joan Brewer at jebrewer@rogers.com

Monthly Theme

CUC Month, Love and Justice

Although it is a bit early to confirm our full schedule of Sunday Services for February, the theme this month is Love and Justice. February is Canadian Unitarian Council Month, and one of our traditions in the Fellowship is to offer a Sharing Our Faith service.

Sharing Our Faith is an annual tradition for congregations across the country to participate in a service crafted using these common resources on a common theme. It allows each individual congregation to reflect on our national connections as part of an interdependent movement in Canada, and by taking up a special Sharing Our Faith offering, supports projects across the country through the annual Sharing Our Faith grants.

Our 2017 Sharing Our Faith service draws from a resource package created by Reverend Fiona Heath in collaboration with the UU Ministers of Canada. The service, as well as our monthly theme, is inspired by CUC's vision statement calling us to Love and Justice: "We, as Canadian Unitarian Universalists, envision a world in which

our interdependence calls us to love and justice.” This vision for Canadian Unitarian Universalism was affirmed at the CUC Annual General Meeting in May 2016, after consultation, discussion, word-smithing, and democratic processes. The new vision statement asks us to live the foundational theology of our seventh principle, “respect for the interdependent web of all existence,” through actions of love and justice. As Rev. Fiona Heath writes: “We are beginning to learn to live interdependently, to learn to care for water and air as essential to life, to be inclusive of all kinds of people, to be aware of how each action we take ripples out to the world. Embodying the experience of connection may take a lifetime to learn, to truly live in the radical interconnectivity of all that is... As we live from an ethic of interdependence, we hear the call of love and justice. The world needs—now more than ever—human societies based on love and connection, not hate and division. Seeking justice for all people helps build a loving, sustainable system.”

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes

More thoughts on Love and Justice

“How does one live a life of the spirit in times like these? The road ahead will be long, and at moments, no doubt, it will also be dark... What this precarious moment requires of us is a more intense version of what every moment requires of us: a commitment to love and to justice. We must fight for justice, but a commitment to justice alone is not enough. Love helps us remember that justice is not an abstraction; the lives of real people—human beings just like us, with hungers, fears, needs, and dreams—are on the line. (And only love in our own lives will keep us from becoming angry, brittle, and self-righteous.) We must commit to love, but love alone is also not enough. The call to justice reminds us that beyond the ever-crucial mandate to interpersonal kindness and compassion, there are social and structural questions to be addressed. Without confronting racial discrimination and economic despair, what ails us as a society will only fester.”

—Rabbi Shai Held

“Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love.”

—Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Take on big jobs worth doing—jobs like the spread of love, peace, and justice. That means refusing to be seduced by our cultural obsession with being effective as measured by short-term results. We all want our work to make a difference—but if we take on the big jobs and our only measure of success is next quarter’s bottom line, we’ll end up disappointed, dropping out, and in despair... Offer yourself to the world—your energies, your gifts, your visions, your heart—with open-hearted generosity. But understand that when you live that way you will soon learn how little

you know and how easy it is to fail. To grow in love and service, you, I, all of us, must value ignorance as much as knowledge and failure as much as success. I know this is ironic advice on graduation day, but clinging to what you already know and do well is the path to an unlived life. So, cultivate beginner’s mind, walk straight into your not knowing, and take the risk of failing and falling again and again, then getting up again and again to learn. That’s the path to a life lived large in service of love, truth, and justice.”

—Parker Palmer,

“*Living From the Inside Out*”

Naropa University Commencement Address



Potato Leek Soup Recipe

Based on a recipe in “*Horn of the Moon Cookbook*”

by Ginny Callan

Ingredients:

- 6 cup water or stock (I use veggie bouillon cubes)
- 6 cup diced potatoes (5 largish potatoes, peel or no)
- 4 Tbs olive oil
- 2 cup sliced leeks
- 1 tsp thyme
- 1.5 tsp dill
- 1 tsp salt
- pepper to taste

Instructions:

Boil the water/stock, add potatoes, cover and simmer until tender. Sauté leeks, thyme and dill in the olive oil until tender. Add to the potatoes with salt and pepper.

Simmer the soup 10-15 minutes more. I use an immersion blender to blend in most of the chunks. If you don’t have one, you can transfer about 3/4 of the soup to a blender and puree.

The original recipe uses flour (2 T) browned in butter and whisked with cream (1 c) which makes the soup, well, more creamy. I don’t bother with this as it doesn’t need to be thickened and I have friends who don’t tolerate gluten.

Enjoy!

Submitted by:
Alyssa Sankey



Notes from the President

I apologize for scooping treasurer Bill Knight and vice-president of finance Myron Hedderson. But because of Touchstone’s deadline I couldn’t help it.

For those of you coming to the annual congregational bud-

get meeting you will hear that we did very well in the finances department in 2016 and things are looking good for 2017.

At this time last year, when the congregation passed the 2016 budget, we were forecasting a deficit of \$3,083.00. We have ended the year with a surplus of \$9,904. Kudos for that result goes to a lot of different people. Committee chairs have been frugal with their budgets and most came under budget by a considerable amount. We got a big boost from fundraising this year. We set a goal of \$2,500 and brought in almost double that amount, at \$4,829. Thanks to everyone who organized and worked in, contributed to and purchased items from our yard/book and bake sale and our goods and services auction.

That doesn't take into account the money raised for the Syrian refugees, \$818, which came from chocolate sales and the karaoke night, and another \$1,432.00 raised for the youth group.

People have been very generous to the fellowship this past year. Our pledged contributions totalled \$12,794, about \$2,000 more than expected. And following our stewardship/pledge campaign in November we are in even better shape heading into 2017 with \$15,730 in pledges. Our members have been exceptionally generous and so have some of our friends, people who attend Sunday services and events but are not signed-up members. A unique feature this year, and idea of board VP Sheila Moore who headed up the campaign, was to solicit former members. We got a good response and some additional cash we wouldn't otherwise have.

Our building and grounds continue to be our largest expense, a little over half of our entire budget. For 2016 it was \$15,509, over budget by about \$1,000. (We had budgeted \$14,445.00). We will continue to look for ways to keep costs down. We are getting some help with rental income, especially from Central Valley Adult Literacy Association, our tenant in the basement.

So thanks to everyone who contributed in any way to put us in good financial shape for the coming year. And thanks to Bill Knight, current treasurer, Myron Hedderson, treasurer for 2015-2016, and VP of finance this year, and to Najat Abdou-McFarland, a board member last year who assisted Myron.

Bookkeeper on Board

A major change coming up in February is the hiring of a bookkeeper who is going to bring us into the 21st Century, putting our financial records into a software program. Kelly A Richard on Hanwell Road will be our bookkeeping company. We hope this might make life easier for our current and future treasurers. Everyone who has taken on the job of treasurer has found it demanding, requiring a lot of volunteer hours.

A focus of the board in January was working on the 2017

budget. Other issues were the loss of our Children's Religious Education program facilitator Naomi Frooman . Her contract ended in December. Due to a lack of enrolment the program is on hold for now. However Sheila Moore, as vice-president of programs and ministry, and Haifa Miller, chair of the RE committee are looking at other possibilities for operating this program.

Naomi did an excellent job and we regret we were not able to attract more children to take advantage of her good work. We wish her luck as she prepares to go to university next fall.

Faith in Diversity Day

St Thomas University is again preparing for their annual Celebration of Faith in Diversity event. We have been participating in this multifaith event since it's beginning. Board member and lay chaplain Deby Nash is our liaison. The tentative date is March 26. I hope members will attend and take this opportunity to extend a hand of friendship to other local faith communities. (The food is always great.)

That's all for now.

Glenna Hanley, President



Upcoming Themes

March: *Simplicity and Abundance*

April: *Sacred Places*

May: *Compassion*

June: *Growth*

Do you have topics or speakers for Sunday Services to suggest? Would you like to give a 20-minute talk on a topic you are passionate about, or contribute to a service by introducing a speaker, reading a poem, or telling a story from your own experiences? If so, please contact me or another member of the Sunday Services Committee (Najat Abdou-McFarland, Tony Fitzgerald, Myron Hedderson, Heather Lunergan, Joan McFarland)

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes

Sunday_Services@UFF.ca



Book Review

Heirs to Forgotten Kingdoms

by Gerard Russell

This book explores what the author calls "the disappearing religions of the Middle East", specifically the Mandaeans and Yazidi in Iraq, Zoroastrians in Iran, Druze in Lebanon, Syria and Egypt, Samaritans in Jerusalem, Copts in Egypt and Kalasha on the Afghan Pakistan border. It

gives intriguing insights into the meeting of cultures such as ancient Greece, Persia, Babylon and Egypt and the days when all Muslims accepted other religions had a right to their beliefs before the twentieth century..

It gives intriguing information on their beliefs, customs and continuing existence, even extending to groups in Lincoln Nebraska and Kensington London. The former is a useful reminder that multi-culturalism does exist in the United States. A religion appears to be something that keeps a community together, in some cases even when the beliefs are only known to a small elite that deliberately refuses to share them. A little Druze girl in the United States was embarrassed when a well-meaning teacher asked her to tell the class what was her holy day, and share some of her beliefs and she did not know the answers. Symbolism and ritual often seemed to be the uniting forces. The role of women was always limited, though one accepted women priests.

As a former diplomat, scholar and specialist in the languages of these areas, Russell brings valuable expertise to

the book and the style is clear. Personally I found it a bit frustrating to only discover the beliefs of the various groups as he discovered them in his travels, bit by bit. However, that's a matter of personal taste and the travels and individuals involved helping to explain the factors establishing and continuing the religions are certainly interesting in themselves.

If anyone would like to borrow my copy, just let me know. I'm in the phone book or email me.

Sheila Andrew



Thanks

Finally, from your humble Touchstone compositor, a sincere and grateful thanks to all who submit articles to this publication. It is your work, all I do is put it together.

In fellowship
Tony Fitzgerald

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