



The Newsletter of the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton

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Sunday Service 10:30 a.m.

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## January Sunday Services

Sunday services are at 10:30am and at 874 York Street.

In January, as we start a new year and the decade of the "new 20s," our theme is Integrity and we will be exploring the question: "What does it mean to be a people of integrity?" The word integrity comes from the Latin integer, meaning whole, with the connotation of "unity" or "one," as in: "We would be one," in hymn #318. In fact, that hymn contains so many aspirations that we hold, so many promises we make. For Unitarian\*Universalists, to be a people of integrity is to be a people of wholeness, to be "at one" with our covenants and our principles, to draw from our sources, experiences, and reflections to live out or to live into the promises of our faith.

—Jo-Anne

**January 5** *The Compass: A Multigenerational Exploration of Integrity.* Coordinated by Jo-Anne and drawing from the UUA's *Toolbox of Faith* curricula, this service will provide opportunities for participants to reflect on the directional compass as a symbol for our inner moral compass. Stories, games, and small group discussions will guide us towards our inner voices and to the teachings of other faith traditions, inviting us to locate our beliefs and principles.

**January 12** *Yoga as a Spiritual Practice* Speaker: Sachne Kilner, Service Leader: Joan McFarland. Sachne grew up in India in an ashram with her Canadian mother and sister where she studied and practiced yoga. According to Sachne, the yoga that she learned is very different from the yoga practiced in the West. The exercise part

is just one small part of the overall spiritual practice.

**January 19** *Confucius on Integrity* Speaker: **Dr. Rodger Wilkie**, Service Leader: Heather Lunegan. Details will be posted on the [website](#) when available.

**January 26** *Covenant of Right Relations* Sometimes Unitarian Universalists are asked, "If you don't need to all believe the same thing, what holds you together?" The answer is that rather than a creed stating what we all believe, members of the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton share a covenant of how we try to be together. Sheila Moore and Joan Brewer will lead the service talking about why we have a covenant, what our covenant says and how we can practice it.

**Following the service:** the annual budget general meeting will take place.



## Regular Monthly Meeting of the Board

**January 12, 2020:** shortly after the Sunday Service, i.e. around 11:45am, in the Board room upstairs.

**Please note:** This date was incorrectly listed in the December Touchstone and other documents.

We hope to have a draft of the budget to consider at this meeting. (The Board may need to meet again in January to complete our work on the budget)



## Budget General Meeting

**January 26, 2020,** shortly following the Sunday Service. The **Annual Budget General Meeting** of the Membership. Please make every effort to attend.



## Women's Potluck

The next Unitarian Fellowship women's potluck will be held Friday, January 24, 2020. Haifa and Sandra will host the gathering at Fellowship House, 874 York Street. We will gather at 6 PM and eat at 6:30 PM.

Topic for the evening: Epiphanies: What experiences/events have clarified your thinking and altered your outlook on life, or helped you change your life's direction? For further information, contact Joan Brewer at [jebrewer@rogers.com](mailto:jebrewer@rogers.com)



## Board Update and Mid-Point Reflections

Last week, in my introductory words to our ceremony, I quoted Reverend Elizabeth Harding of the Second Unitarian Church of Chicago: "The fire communion separates the end of the year from the beginning, helping us to put in perspective the joys and sorrows, the changes and transitions, the ups and downs of the year. It's a half-way point in our church year, but a celebration of the outside calendar's year's end and year's beginning."

So at this midpoint of the Fellowship year, which begins with our Summer Sundays, continues throughout the terms of our Board members and our Committee Chairs, and ends shortly after the Annual General Meeting, it is a good time to take stock of what we have done and what we hope to do:

- We have a process in place to promote our Fellowship more fully in the community and we are becoming better known. We have welcomed visitors and new friends to our services, children's program, and other activities.
- For the first time as a congregation, we took part in the Pride Festival with a banner, kiosk, and flyers about the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton.
- Our Lay Chaplain, Jenn Carpenter-Gleim, has officiated at 18 wedding ceremonies in 2019.
- We have completed our Stewardship campaign and collected both pledges and requests from Committee Chairs and others. Please plan to attend the Annual Budget Meeting, one of our two yearly meetings of the membership (i.e., congregational meetings at which all active members may vote) on January 26, after the service.
- We are moving through our Treasury team transition. Guided by the Ad hoc Committee on Financial Transition (and especially by Myron Hedderson and Jeff Frooman), the Treasurer's role has been reconfigured, software has been purchased and installed, and plans have been made to proceed to hiring a bookkeeper. On January 1, 2020 (or as soon after as paperwork, orientation, and weather allow), Kevin Wyllie will take over as acting Treasurer and added a signing officer. Myron will remain as signing officer and will be working on the budget and the tax receipts with Kevin's help. Jeff will continue to look after day-to-day transactions and Myron and Jeff will help orient Kevin and, a bit later, the new bookkeeper.
- We are making plans for the CUC National Conference, to be held May 15 to May 17 at King's College in Halifax. I have spoken to a few people about volunteering to help with registration, exhibitors (including the CUC table), and I am optimistic that we will find several more. Orientation will be provided in the spring, a few months before the Conference. We will also need a second delegate to represent us, along with Jenn Carpenter-Gleim. Please look at last month's Touchstone for details. We highly encourage our UFF members to attend, whether or not you are able to volunteer. We hope to do fundraising to raise enough money to help many members attend.
- As part of our evolving Safety Policy, we have purchased a defibrillator and plan to have a member help us learn how to use it after an upcoming service. We have also installed an egress from the children's room.

This time of year is also a time for me to reflect on different areas of my life. As I am mid-way through my second (and therefore last) year as president, I am at the three-quarters point in this volunteer role. Since I began in July 2018, I have been very pleased that the Board works so well together and that our volunteer leaders continue to offer meaningful worship services, programs, and activities. I look forward to creating new commitments and relationships, sustaining covenants, and building on our strengths in the new year.

I write a lot about dreaming together, and frequently invite leaders, volunteers, members, and friends to imagine the kind of community we want, so we can continue the work we are already doing to create it. In my reflections at the mid-point of this year, I am wondering what vision each of you has of the Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton.

My vision of the Fellowship includes the following:

- Connecting our members and friends with other Unitarian\*Universalists. This is something we can start in the short-term and accomplish before the end of my term. I encourage all of you to attend the Canadian Unitarian Council's National Conference in Halifax, May 15 to 17, 2020. The AGM (Friday) and Conference sessions (Saturday and Sunday), as well as meals will be held at King's College, and reasonably priced rooms are available at LeMerchant, one of Dalhousie's residence. The last time the CUC held an ACM in our area, Saint John, many UFF members and friends took advantage of the business meeting, Conference sessions, keynote talk, Ingathering and Sunday Worship, children's program, not to mention social events and other opportunities to meet informally and chat. Talking to other people from across the country is especially invaluable for us as a small congregation, the only UU group in the province and one of two in the Atlantic provinces. I'm involved both as president of a "nearby" congregation

and as CUC Conference Convenor and am committed to making this opportunity to work for as many of us as possible, so we will gain a wider view of UUism in Canada.

- Shifting from a “scarcity” mindset to an “abundance” or a “generosity” mindset of stewardship. Celebrating the generosity of others and aspiring to be as generous as we can with our time, treasures, and talents are optimistic attitudes, rooted in a belief in goodness and benevolence, while a scarcity mentality is rooted in fear. My vision is one in which the board and all members and friends dream together about what they want for our community and work together to make it happen, with our characteristic willingness and determination and with more optimism or faith.
- Celebrating all members and friends and helping them feel that they are cherished. It is vital in a small congregation like ours to recognize the contributions everyone makes. As a UU congregation, we have made a commitment to affirm the worth and dignity of all, and we have an inspirational Covenant of Right Relations to guide us. In other settings, I have stated that showing up is volunteering; when I organize a literary event, the readers or performers value the presence and interest of the audience as much as an essential contribution to their work. Our volunteers serve members, friends, and visitors with generosity of spirit as well as hard work; celebrating their service and the presence of all will remind us of the importance of our community.
- Viewing ourselves as a gift to our local community, a group that makes a difference to those who are marginalized or suffering. I am looking forward to bringing our amended social action bylaw to life, choosing what we want to work on as a congregation and how to make change and be of service to the world. I would like us to reflect on our charitable mandate and think about how we can be more outward-looking. For instance, we have a beautiful building and grounds, space for more activities that all can attend and for more outside groups to meet. I would like to explore how we can become a safe haven for people of marginalized gender identities, racialized people, religious minorities, and others who need “justice, equity, and compassion.”
- Embracing diversity of beliefs in new and meaningful ways. Along with the “free and responsible search for meaning,” and the “the right of conscience,” we also covenant to affirm the “acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.” Many of our members come from other faith traditions and have been wounded by, or have rejected, belief systems of these churches. I would like to see how we can heal these wounds, encourage our members to act on their chosen values, and learn more about world religions and about the wide range of Unitarian and Universalist beliefs. We have children, youth, young

adults, and even people who are no longer young adults (i.e., over 35) who were born into this or other UU communities, raised as UUs, and recognize it as part of their religious or spiritual identity. Their worship practices and spirituality, their connections across the country, and their ideas of belonging and UU identity could teach us all a lot about our denomination. And, along with secular humanists, we have people who would like to have more spiritual and more religious content. In growing a more diverse community, starting with religious and spiritual diversity is a meaningful approach for UUs.

In faith and commitment

Jo-Anne Elder-Gomes

President, 2019-2020,

Unitarian Fellowship of Fredericton



## “New Friends” Brunch

Saturday, Jan. 18<sup>th</sup> 11:30 – 1:30

The Membership Committee will be hosting a Brunch for those who are new (or fairly new!) to our congregation. If you would like to attend please call Sheila Moore 450-9021 or e-mail [smoore@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:smoore@nbnet.nb.ca)



## Fund Raising Projects

**Fund-raising projects to assist UFF members to attend the CUC annual meeting and conference May 15 – 17, 2020 in Halifax**

1. Hospitality committee will be selling homemade soup in quart jars for \$8.00 a jar. Soup can be picked up after the Sunday service on January 12<sup>th</sup> and January 19<sup>th</sup>. Vegetarian lentil soup on January 12<sup>th</sup>. Ham and potato soup on January 19<sup>th</sup>. If you find you like our soups, we may offer other varieties throughout the remainder of January and into February.

2. Keep your eyes and ears open for information about dinners / luncheons hosted by individual members throughout January and February. You don't want to miss one of these. Information will follow about how it works as a fund-raising project.

Joan Brewer,  
chair of Hospitality Committee





## Winter Solstice 2019

Once again, Moon Joyce invited folks to join her on the banks of the “Beautiful and Bountiful River”, Wolastoq, on the morning of the longest night. There to greet the Solstice Sun with song and fire. A couple of dozen people joined her in the cold pre-dawn. Moon has been facilitating this simple but significant ceremony for thirty years.

A small group of participants wait, silhouetted against the brightening dawn, for the Sun.

No disappointment, the Sun crests the horizon on as close to perfect a day as one could wish for the ceremony.



Photos thanks to Judi Day



## Discourse On the Method of Rightly Constructing One's Research and Seeking the Truth in Sciences

Rene Descartes, 1637

Contrary to the views of the novel reviewed last time, I did not find Descartes selfish and inhuman. Before he wrote this book he had studied with the Jesuits, researched canon and civil law and travelled with the French army as an unpaid volunteer then pursued the “good life” through gambling, duelling and travelling. Then he followed his “blinding flash” on the method to put all sciences and knowledge on a firm footing and retired to Holland to avoid distraction.



The basic thesis is that nothing should be accepted as true as long as he has a single doubt. Each difficulty should be divided in as many parts as feasible and necessary to resolve it and each part considered and reviewed so comprehensively that he should be certain of missing nothing.

He does not accept the classical view that verbal argument is enough as the desire to win can overcome the search for truth. Discussion with others is needed and his main desire is to increase scientific ability to improve the health of all.

He starts with explaining that God, as far as corporeal nature allows him to understand him, has none of the imperfections he finds in himself, God is not corporeal because intelligent nature is distinct from corporeal nature, God is not dependent as dependency is a defect. All imperfect beings depend on God's power and can not subsist for a moment without it. The existence of a perfect being is contained in his study as the geometric nature of a triangle or globe is at the very least just as certain as the existence of God. God created a rational soul and joined it to the body in a particular manner

He sees the main purpose of life as thought on scientific issues to improve the health of all humans. Emotion and ill health will interfere with this thought. Failure to communicate his discoveries will be against the law of life that requires him to help others. He has destroyed several of his works when he began to doubt them.

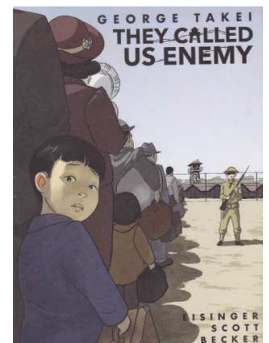
So this is not a selfish work intended to bring him wealth or fame He regards wealth as a distraction from thought and seems frightened of fame. Communication with other humans is essential to his scientific progress. On the other hand it does read as the work of a man frightened by the recent imprisonment of Galileo in his own house for the rest of his life for challenging contemporary views on the universe that were seen as essential to belief in God. Descartes says he is publishing this because he must. The section on God may seem to some of us to be based on faith rather than the total lack of doubt he demands for acceptance. It may also be the work of a lonely man as he has moved to avoid distraction. There is no mention of loving individuals. Perhaps it is necessary to read some of his other work to see if “I think therefore I am” denies other aspects of life most of us see as positive.

Sheila Andrew



## They Called Us Enemy

Those of us in the “Boomer” generation know George Takei as Lieutenant Hikaru Sulu, the helmsman of the USS Enterprise in the original series Star Trek. George was born in California in 1937 and was four years old when the Japanese empire attacked the United States in a surprise raid on Pearl Harbour, the Territory of Hawaii. This graphic novel details George and his family's experiences in the internment camps which the U.S. government set up and in which U.S.



residents of Japanese ancestry were confined.

George's father had been born in Japan so was classified as Issei. George's mother had been born in California so was Nisei, however, her father had sent her back to Japan for education to avoid the segregation to which Japanese Americans were subject. When war broke out, George had a younger brother and a baby sister. The family was only allowed to take what they could carry when the soldiers came and their first internment camp had them living in what had been horse stables which still smelled of manure.

We follow the family's story told from the point of view of George, the growing child, through the end of the war. Details of the politics and struggles are filled in as George learned of them in conversations with his father later in life. We also follow George in his early acting career and getting the role of Sulu, then honours and awards he earned for his role in fighting for acknowledgement of the injustices of the treatment of Americans of Japanese ancestry during and after the war; and for his part in the fight of LGBT rights and marriage equality.

The graphic novel can present a lot of information very quickly by the use of pictures. Perhaps not every illustra-

tion is worth a thousand words, but a few pencil strokes filling an eye with tears gives the impression of anguish without ambiguity and immediately.

Lest we be too smug, we must remember that Canada's treatment of Canadians of Japanese ancestry was no better than that in the United States. Joy Kogawa's book *Obasan* tells a very similar story from our side of the border.

The Canadian singer, James Keelaghan, in his song "Kiri's Piano", tells a haunting story of a woman who consigned her most prized possession to the harbour rather than leave it to be confiscated and sold without compensation. This sentiment is represented in Takei's book by three panels at the bottom of page 24 where a woman smashes a vase rather than sell it for a pittance.

This book was a gift to me from my son for the Yule. I had heard Takei interviewed on the CBC program "Q" when the book was being promoted and I had thought at the time it would be an interesting read. It did not disappoint.

Tony Fitzgerald

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