

Universalist Unitarian
Church of Halifax
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uuchurch@eastlink.ca
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Rev. Norm Horofker
Minister
Office Hours
Tues, Wed, Fri 10-3
Cell 902-229-9239

Sandra Jamieson
Office Administrator
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Mon, 9-3 (lunch 12-1)
Wed, Fri 10-3

Deborah Wiggins
Music Director

RE Director
Tanya Bilsbury

Kim Turner
President

Newsletter
Etta Hamm
Sylvia Mattinson
Sandra Jamieson

Sunday service
10:30 am

All are welcome

Children & Youth Education
Child care available

Theme for October: Healing

October 1

Presenter: Rev. Norm Horofker; Service Leader: Dean White

Where do we Start to Heal the Brokenness?

What is broken in our world is our relationships... to the planet, to each other, to ourselves. And healing can only happen in relationship. Where and how do we begin?

October 8

Presenter: Rev. Anthony Makar; Service Leader: Rev. Norm Horofker
Rev. Makar is the minister of the UU Church of Atlanta Georgia. (See article inside.)

To Quit Playing God

"First of all, we had to quit playing God," writes Bill W., one of the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous. What does it mean to surrender like this? How might this be seen as an integral part of the healing process, and of supporting an attitude of thankfulness and gratitude?

October 15

Presenter: Robin Humphrey; Service Assistant; Martha Wilson

Healing and Transformation through the Brahmaviharas

In Buddhism, it is thought that true love has the power to heal and transform us, while bringing deep meaning to our lives. Robin will speak about the meaning of The Four Elements, or Brahmaviharas, that make up the true source of love in Buddhist teaching.

October 22

Presenter: Rev. Norm Horofker; Service Leader: Margaret Galbraith

UN Sunday – Should we Celebrate the UN in our Worship Services?

October 24 every year is United Nations Day. Traditionally we have dedicated a Sunday service to this day. Is that appropriate every year? If so, why? If not, why not? Jane Wilson, our UU-UNO Youth Envoy will assist in the service.

October 29

Presenter: Rev. Norm Horofker; Service Leader: Brian Gifford

A Blessing of the Animals

October 4 is a day set aside in the Christian Church to celebrate Saint Francis of Assisi, famous for his connection to animals. Today we will honour that tradition as members and friends of the congregation are invited to bring their well-behaved pets into the sanctuary. As an alternative, members and friends may wish to bring a photograph to share. Lia Woolaver will assist with the service.

Our Theme for Next Month (November): ***Identity***

Our mission is to provide a community that nurtures personal and spiritual growth, practices inclusiveness, celebrates diversity and affirms individual and collective commitment to community service and social justice.



OCTOBER 2017

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|---|---|--|-----------|---|
| 1 9:30 Music Noon Worship Committee | 2 | 3 | 4 4:45-6:15 pm Afterchoir | 5 9:30-11:30 am Parents & Tots  Noon Tai Chi | 6 | 7 10 am – noon UU Brunch |
| 8 9:30 am Music Noon Social Responsibility | 9 3-5 pm Thanksgiving Dinner at UUCH  | 10 | 11 4:45-6:15 pm Afterchoir | 12 9:30–11:30am Parents & Tots Noon Tai Chi 4-7 pm Salmon Dinner at Mi'kmaq Friendship Centre | 13 | 14 10 am – noon UU Brunch Hike, Lakeview Trail |
| 15 9:30 Music Noon Humanist Group | 16 | 17 | 18 4:45-6:15 pm Afterchoir | 19 9:30 – 11:30 am Parents & Tots Noon Tai Chi 6:30 pm Board meeting | 20 | 21 10 am – noon UU Brunch |
| 22 9:30 Music Noon Intro to UUism with Rev. Norm | 23 10 am Newsletter deadline | 24 1:30-3:30 pm Time to Talk | 25 4:45-6:15 pm Afterchoir | 26 9:30 – 11:30 am Parents & Tots Noon Tai Chi | 27 | 28 10 am – noon UU Brunch |
| 29 9:30 am Music Rev. Norm's office Blessing of the Animals during the service Noon Semi-annual General Meeting | 30 | 31 Halloween  | | | |  |

The Semi-annual General Meeting of the UUCH will be held on Sunday, October 29, 2017, at noon.

The meeting will conduct the following business:

1. Business arising from the minutes of the May 2017 Annual General Meeting.
2. Receive and approve reports from the Minister, various officers and committees.
3. Adoption of a budget for the 2018 calendar year.
4. Adoption of the Annual Financial Campaign.
5. Appointment/confirmation of the Nominating Committee to identify candidates for the 2018/2019 officers and members of the Board of Directors.
6. Other business as may be raised before or at the meeting.

Members-only vote on motions, but non-members are most welcome to attend!

Pam Berman, Secretary, UUCH Board of Directors

Minister's Notes



Saturday brunch and other peccadillos!

Our theme for the month of October is Healing. I want to begin this month by thanking the congregation and in particular the board of directors for allowing me to push the envelope of my own spiritual growth and in that way, heal my soul... You have tolerated my experimenting, trying out ideas... sometimes succeeding and sometimes failing, sometimes with approval in advance, sometimes with approval afterward, sometimes with gentle correction but always I have felt the love. Spiritual healing begins when we start doing something different, or at least something differently, and is best guided by that personal "still quiet voice" that speaks to our soul, or our heart (if you prefer). My missteps in this process are the "peccadillos" (small sins) that I refer to in the title of these notes.

One of these "experiments in healing" has been our Saturday brunch. Prior to this initiative we had essentially no relationship with our neighbours, a situation that I felt provided an opportunity for healing. I first suggested we open the church on Saturday for coffee and donuts in February of 2015. Since then the Saturday morning has grown to a "pop-up restaurant" serving a full hearty Saturday brunch where 6 or 8 volunteers serve up to 40 guests. In the process, the cost for the Brunch has gone from \$20 per week to \$120, or about \$3.50 per guest.

I felt the need for this outreach personally. After all, what kind of minister doesn't know his neighbours, especially so, when many of them are living on income assistance and dealing with health issues of all kinds. But I also perceived the need in other members of the congregation to get

out of their comfort zone and make some friends outside of their prescribed social circle.

Unitarian Universalism calls us to heal the world, not only by lobbying for legislation and marching in protests; our faith tradition calls us to get to know "the other" in a personal way, to give meaning to our expression of the inherent worth of every individual, and in the process to heal ourselves.

And now, the experiment I began has reached a point where we, as a congregation need to assess the way forward. The cost for the brunch has been covered by a combination of the minister's professional expense budget, contributions to the Minister's Discretionary Fund and the Sunday plate collection once each month. In addition, we have just started to encourage a freewill offering at the lunch from our guests. It is reasonable to ask... should the minister be spending his professional budget on this project even if he wants to do so, and should we be encouraging special donations to the Minister's Discretionary Fund in order to pay for the Saturday brunch? One suggestion is that we leave out a bottle where anyone on Sunday or any other time they are in church, could make a freewill offering to the brunch, remembering that \$3.50 buys breakfast for a neighbour who needs the help.

The problem with the last suggestion is that the congregation has not decided that this should be a major part of our mission. We don't want everyone with a good idea putting a bottle out for collections... or at least I don't think we do.

Whatever the leadership of the congregation decides in this matter will be OK with me, as long as we frame the decision around questions of our mission and our generosity, not from a perspective of shortage... for the resources are there, if we choose to use them in this way.

So, forgive me my peccadillos and prepare yourself for more of them in the future...

Love, Norm

Board Buzz

Our meeting this month was not only the first of the new church year, it was the first time we had a member joining us from the Himalayas! Shripad Pendse skyped in from Northern India, and in spite of it being about 3:30 am there, he managed to follow and contribute to the discussion.

Our lengthy agenda covered a myriad of topics, but we managed to deal with them all. Here are some of the highlights:

At a congregational meeting on Sunday September 10, we voted to spend \$45-50,000 on renovating the kitchen. Marilyn Shinyei reported on behalf of the kitchen committee that two contractors were consulted and that they could start in October or November. She presented the plans for the kitchen and invited comments. She expects the work to take about 3-4 weeks. During that time programs using the main floor will be cancelled (except for Sunday services).

We have received an access grant from HRM, \$4,000 which will be used for the automatic doors and ramp in the front. We are still waiting for the heritage grant which will be used for rebuilding the vestibule, although we are very optimistic that it is just a matter of time. Timing however is important since the doors cannot be installed until the vestibule is done. It was decided to use the access grant to buy the hardware and door right away. The work will be completed either by late fall or as early as possible in the spring.

Marilyn gave the Treasurer's report, and she is predicting a small deficit this year, after a small surplus last year. The canvass this year, will be called "A Fine Balance" and will start in early November with Commitment Sunday on November 5th. Look forward to some fine testimonials from our members during the month of October!

The Communications committee is looking at the idea of putting the UUCH directory on a password protected part of our website. This way it could include pictures of members, and would be helpful for getting to know each other. A small number of directories would be printed for those who don't have access to computers.

We discussed the sustainability of two of the church's outreach programs: the Saturday morning brunch, and Parents and Tots. Both are growing and becoming more expensive to run. In addition, I will be away from January to June next year so will need to hire someone to run the tots group (2 hours per week). Fortunately, a donation from one of the regular attendees at Parents and Tots will cover staff costs, but both programs will start inviting "goodwill" donations from attendees. The offering plate from one Sunday a month will go towards the Saturday brunch.

Finally, in keeping with one of our resolutions from the retreat held in August, let's get started: more celebrating ourselves and our accomplishments, and as Kim said in the last newsletter, "more fellowship and opportunities for meaningful times together"!



Molly Hurd
Vice-president
UUCH Board of Directors

More detail on capital improvements

Molly is reporting elsewhere in this newsletter on both the kitchen and the front entry projects. I would like to enlarge on the details of those.

Kitchen: We will use the \$8,000 remaining in our Capital Campaign Fund and draw the rest of the money from the bequest of Cynthia Davis received in November 2016.



Front entry: Two grants have been applied for to repair the vestibule, install automatic doors, rebuild the ramp from the parking lot to the front door and repair the west wall of the building.



The grants from Access NS and Heritage NS will cover \$9,150 of a projected \$15,850 budget, leaving us with \$6,700 to cover. We anticipated having a quick Capital Campaign to raise that money but, in the meantime, we have received a donation of \$10,000 from Ian Meinertzhagen, widower of Nancy Meinertzhagen. Nancy had increasing disability as her disease progressed so the Board has decided that it would be very appropriate to use Ian's generous donation to help

pay for improving the accessibility of the front entry.

We're happy not to have to ask the congregation for more money at the same time as the annual budget drive gets underway (as it does each November). We do try not to overwhelm you with our funding requests. On the other hand if you would like to contribute towards either project, we wouldn't say no!

The kitchen is going to be very expensive and when it is done there may still be things we need beyond the budget. For example the budget includes a bussing cart to collect dirty cups and dishes, a moveable stainless steel island, and a new hood fan, but it doesn't include a few things that can wait such as a new fridge, a new microwave, new pots, pans, dishes and tablecloths. Oh we are going to be so sparkly and matchy-matchy you won't know the place!



If one of those items is something you would like to provide, please talk to the kitchen committee before purchasing anything. We have clear ideas and detailed specs for what is needed.



Marilyn Shinyei
UUCH Board Treasurer

Photos by Etta Hamm

The Caring Column

Michael Smith's daughter, **Robin Smith Armstrong**, diagnosed with stage three colon cancer earlier this year, is doing well following surgery. Michael's granddaughter, Brynn Smith Armstrong, age 5, is recovering from surgery for a badly broken arm after an accident at school. We wish them both continued healing.



Alison Chipman was in the hospital in Dartmouth for about a week and is now doing well at home. She plans to be back in church soon and we look forward to seeing her.

Barbara Harsanyi is greatly relieved that her granddaughter **Erika Kulnys** is safely back in Nova Scotia. She is grateful for the support she received during this stressful time.

Louise Malloch was hospitalized for a week at the beginning of September with new blood clots in her lungs. She is home now but has increased shortness of breath. She is waiting to hear if she can join a clinical trial which sounds promising. Her mother Susan White will arrive in late October, but Louise could use some extra help until then and would appreciate visits. Please call ahead, 902-414-3408 or email lmalloch@gmail.com.

The Caring Committee is looking for more volunteers to drive congregants to appointments or to do occasional grocery shopping for them. If you have a car and are available occasionally during the week and would like to help, please contact me at 902-823-1176 or email me at meo@eastlink.ca. With winter coming it is harder for some of our older members to go out safely.

Mary Ellen Onno

Sharing our Joys and Sorrows

The Worship Committee has decided to try something new this fall. During our services, we're going to experiment with different ways of sharing Joys & Sorrows.

First, if you want your joy or sorrow to be shared with the whole congregation, you can write it down on a card before the service begins and give it to Rev. Norm; he will pass these thoughts on to the congregation. Second, we will have, at the front of the room, a bowl of water and a collection of shells; during our time for Joys & Sorrows, you may come to the front and silently drop a shell in the water. This signals to the congregation that something is going on in your life



that you wish to share. People are encouraged to follow-up during coffee hour or during the week with friends who have put shells in the water.

Different UU congregations use different ways of sharing events that are important to members. Besides the messages shared by the minister and the shells or pebbles dropped in water, some congregations have people silently light candles; speak one word only of what's on their minds; write their thoughts in a book that everyone can read later; or speak only once or twice a year.



If this experiment doesn't work out well for our congregation, we can try another way of sharing our news. And please keep in mind that we can always go back to sharing by passing the microphone.

Thank you for your patience with any glitches while we all get accustomed to this experiment. And as always, the Worship Committee welcomes your thoughts or feedback on our services.

Avard Woolaver



Reports please!

**Committee reports for the SAGM are due in my Inbox by
10 am, Wednesday, Oct 18th.
Early submissions would be most helpful.**

Your cooperation will enable me to:

1. Compile your reports in the right order.
2. Include your reports on the agenda.
3. Email a complete agenda and package of reports out via Uuinfo on Friday, October 21st.

Don't miss the opportunity of having your report(s) included.

A number of SAGM packages will be available by request on Sunday the 23rd, one week prior to the meeting. This timeline is normal and expected business practice.

To minimize the over-use and expense of paper, anyone taking a set on the 23rd might try to resist the temptation of taking a second set at the meeting.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sandra Jamieson
uuchurch@eastlink.ca

Help needed for Saturday Brunch

Volunteers are needed to help host our Saturday brunch. Every Saturday, UUCH hosts a buffet-style brunch from 10:00-12:00 for 30-40 guests from our neighbourhood. What a great way to help people who really appreciate company and a good meal.



Tasks

- Setting everything up before brunch (9:30-10:00)
- Cooking food for brunch (9:30-11:30)
- Washing dishes (10:30-1:00)
- Putting everything away after brunch (12:00-1:00)
- Socializing with guests (10:00-12:00)

Time Commitment

- Volunteer as often as your schedule permits; could be weekly, biweekly, monthly, or occasionally
- You can choose to stay for just a little while to do one of the tasks listed above, or to keep busy for the entire shift
- We especially need people to help with cleanup from 12:00-1:00

Contact

Reverend Norm Horofker

- Phone: 902-229-9239
- Email: nhorofker@aol.com

*Thank you Jesse,
for being our
new volunteer finder!
~ Ed.*

Volunteer drivers needed

The Caring Committee is seeking volunteers who can drive congregants to get their groceries, run errands and attend medical appointments.



This is a great opportunity to get to know other members of the congregation, and to help others be healthy, active and independent.

Tasks

- Picking up your 'client', driving them to their destination and back home afterwards
- Helping load the car with groceries or other items; carrying bags or parcels
- Socializing with your client in the car or during time spent in a waiting room

Requirements

- Driver's license & access to a vehicle
- No special insurance is required

Time commitment

- Generally 1-3 hours at a time, depending on the errand and the destination
- This is a flexible commitment – help is appreciated whenever you are able
- The greatest need is for drivers who are available during business hours, Monday-Friday, since this is when most medical appointments are scheduled
- Drivers are also needed to bring congregants to and from church on Sundays

Contact

Mary Ellen Onno

- Phone: 902-823-1176
- Email: meo@eastlink.ca

or Sylvia Mattinson

- Phone: 902-454-4142
- Email: viasy1100@gmail.com

Hike the Lakeview Trail, October 14



The hike this month will be the Lakeview Trail system in the Long Lake Provincial Park Reserve. This is more of a stroll in the woods than a hike but I am hoping the fall colours will still be vibrant. When the trail first opened, its surface was rough gravel that was a difficult walking surface for human and dog alike. It has been replaced with a user-friendly crusher dust. The trail is wheelchair accessible.

Meet at the church at 12:30 or at the parking lot for the trail system off Northwest Arm Drive at the exit to Long Lake Village. This is the last exit off Northwest Arm Drive before you reach Old Sambro Road. As usual, if you are lost or running late, call me at 902-483-4731.

Allyn Clarke

Rev. Anthony Makar UUCH guest speaker October 8

Rev. Anthony Makar grew up in Calgary and moved to Texas when he was 12. He is a former college professor of philosophy; his lifelong passion is figure skating. Since 2007, he has been the Senior Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta, the largest UU congregation in the Southeastern United States. Rev. Makar reports that it was a privilege to be Rev. Norm's internship supervisor. We are most fortunate to have Rev. Makar with us on the 8th; let's fill the church and show him our best Maritime welcome!



Introducing Jesse and JF

I was asked to introduce to you Jesse Robson and Jean-Francois Turcotte ("JF") and I'm happy to do so.

Jesse comes from Corner Brook; JF was born in Halifax but his family left when he was very young and he has lived in Montreal, Toronto, Paris and New Jersey. Jesse recently met a woman from Western Canada to whom she mentioned she was looking for a church. The woman told her about the UU church she attended so Jesse checked us out—and here they are! Jesse and JF came to our church for the first time on June 18th, our picnic day. with lots of time for conversation. I sensed then that they and the UUCH would be in harmony. They have attended almost every Sunday service since then.



Jesse is a seeker, and that is why she worked for a time in South Africa in a circus focused on helping children of the poor townships there. She is also a doer, and in her short time among us she has created a new volunteer opportunities board, worked on the great garden we have growing, attended our August leadership retreat, and helped Tanya organize an overnight camping adventure for UUs. She has also provided us with tasty cookies—and, oh yes, she danced on our float for the entire route of the gay pride parade!

In South Africa Jesse and JF ran a youth shelter in Cape Town while Jesse was in the circus and JF studied at the University of the Western Cape. Now back in Halifax, JF volunteers at the Halifax Tool Library which lends tools to its members. He has also worked on the church garden, weeding and keeping an eye out for the ripening crop, and says he will be happy to participate in more activities as his time permits.

We are so pleased that Jesse and JF have already officially joined our church!

Sylvia Mattinson



Religious Exploration

We kicked off the RE year in September with a camping trip to Dollar Lake (8 participants), which was a great way for children and adults to bond while having fun and a little adventure (like taking a dip in the alarmingly orange water).

Over the summer I applied to the UUA's Religious Educator Credentialing Program. Following an interview I was accepted into the program in August, becoming the first Canadian candidate. I am new to being a religious educator and I think that this formal, structured program will give me the background and skills to offer the congregation a professional level of service.

This month the children will continue to learn about our Seven Principles; each week I try to tie the story we read during A Time for All Ages to discussion, and an activity focused on one of the seven principles. So far we have discussed the story of Noah and the Flood in relation to the first principle, and Stone Soup in relation to the second principle.

RE will be moving away from a classroom, curriculum-based model to a more integrative and dynamic 'faith formation' model. The latter is more appropriate to the common situation where attendance in RE is highly variable. I am moving toward the following goals for RE:



- More intergenerational services that are designed to be appealing and accessible for all ages, e.g., flower communion, water communion, and having the children present their RE work to the congregation at the end of the year.
- Having the first part of all services geared for the inclusion or engagement of children before they go upstairs after the Story for all Ages: chalice lighting, singing a song, children's announcements, and possibly staying for the collection.
- Planning children's activities and/or discussions around the same messages that are given to the adult congregation in the service, so that we can address the same themes or topics as a community. In the event that the service does not cover an idea that is accessible to children, the children's activities will be based on the broader theme of the month.
- Informing parents of upcoming RE plans (stories, activities, discussions) for the month (likely via the newsletter) so that families can plan ahead to discuss or 'unpack' ideas that we will be collectively learning about as a church.

As always, I am open to your feedback on how RE can be improved. Thank you for your support,

Tanya Bilisbury
Director of Religious Exploration

Music Montage

*"There is no music in a rest,
but there is the making of music in it."
~ John Ruskin*



October's 'Singing As We Gather'

The Gathering Hymn for September is #1053 *How Could Anyone*. October's theme is *Healing*. I find the lyrics of this hymn are very moving and meaningful for the theme.

*How could anyone every tell you, you were anything less than beautiful?
How could anyone every tell you, you were less than whole?
How could anyone fail to notice that your loving is a miracle?
How deeply you're connected to my soul.*

Monthly Music Projects

Our monthly Themed Music Projects continue. Each month there is one Sunday when all are invited to join in making a joyful noise, celebrating that month's theme in song. There are opportunities to rehearse at least a couple of weeks before each Music Project Sunday. No need to commit to more than one month at a time or to every Sunday, and there is no need to read music.

The October Music Project will be on Sunday, October 15th.

The next rehearsal opportunities for this are:

- Sunday, October 1st, at 9:30 am
- Sunday, October 8th, at 9:30 am
- Sunday, October 15th, at 9:30 am

November's Music Project will be on Sunday, November 19th.

Rehearsal opportunities for this are:

- Sunday, October 22nd, at 9:30 am
- Sunday, October 29th, at 9:30 am (Rev. Norm's office)
- Sunday, November 5th, at 9:30 am
- Sunday, November, 12th, at 9:30 am
- Sunday, November 19th, at 9:30 am

Happy autumn to all!

Deborah Wiggins
Music Director

OTHER THINGS COMING UP

| | |
|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">October 2 Marilyn & Frank Shinyei are moving.</p> <p>Update your church directory: 804-5 Horizon Court Dartmouth, NS B3A 0C4 New phone #: 902-404-6539 Cell: 902-292-8262</p> <p>Another update: Jesse Robson's preferred email: TheSeaUrchin@gmail.com</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">October 22 UU-UNO Sunday</p> <p>As UU-UNO Youth Envoy for UUCH, I will be assisting during the church service on this date. The UU-UNO theme for 2017 has been disarmament, especially of nuclear weapons. Recently I participated in a conference call on this. This is an interesting topic that I would urge you to learn more about. The theme for 2018 will be refugees and global migration. You can learn more about these things at uu-uno.org. Thank you! Jane Wilson</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">October 9, 3-5 pm Thanksgiving Dinner at UUCH</p> <p>As many of you know, we always have a great potluck dinner for all on Thanksgiving Monday, this year on October 9th.</p> <p>We are looking for a person (or two) to coordinate the event. Please contact Norm if you are able to take this on. This will be so appreciated by 30-40 people. Just a matter of getting the word out, asking people to bring food—and rounding up a few helpers. The “uuinfo” messaging service will be at your disposal. Easy peasy—and fun too!</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">October 23, Monday, 10 am Newsletter Deadline</p> <p>This is the deadline for submissions for the November newsletter.</p> <p>Please submit to both braeside@eastlink.ca and uuchurch@eastlink.ca</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">October 12, 4-7 pm Salmon Dinner, Mi'kmaq Friendship Centre 2158 Gottingen St., Halifax</p> <p>We are invited to this public event that will serve over 200 people commemorating Treaty Day in Halifax. Our Truth and Reconciliation Task Team is hoping that some of our members and friends will attend. There is no charge although 50/50 ticket will be sold and there will be a silent auction. Can we count you in? Norm</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">OCT 24, Tuesday, 1:30-3:30 pm “Time to Talk” At the church</p> <p>Two topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funeral and burial options• Natural death options (home death, hospice, death doula, home funerals, etc.) <p>All are welcome. Marilyn</p> |

HRM Kick-off for Community ACCESS-Ability Grants 2017-18

On Friday, September 9 at about 11 am, Norm called to ask whether I would be willing and able to give a short presentation about accessibility grants on the ensuing Monday at a meeting to be held at an East Preston church.

We were invited because UUCH received a grant to assist in the cost of making our main church entrance truly accessible to all.

Since I am more courageous (read foolish) than I used to be before I could use ordinary buses, and since I had just learned that as of this month **all** Metro Transit buses are low-floor, or wheelchair accessible, I said yes no problem. He followed his request with an email at 11:41 am which I admit I didn't read carefully since I had other things to do that weekend. The one thing I did, however, was figure out which buses would get me to East Preston, but soon gave up that quest. The church's location was too remote. I called Steven, my devoted handyman and he agreed to take me. With the important aspect of actually getting to the meeting done, I concentrated on those other things that would fill my weekend.

Only by late Sunday afternoon did I get around to reading Norm's email more carefully. It contained a note from the Acting Communications Director, Department of Community Services that I'd skipped over. My entire existence is run by Community Services so I sometimes skip the odd verbiage. Please don't get me wrong—I am grateful for what I get from Community Services but they are constantly on their guard for people taking advantage of them and can sometimes be annoyingly bureaucratic and show a remarkable lack of support and helpfulness. The director's note suggested that “Ms. Gradstein's remarks need not be long, just a few words on what these grants mean for the disabled community.”

In my first draft I concentrated on the bus service, the importance of accessibility when you sing in a church choir, and the time I got a grant in 1995—

which, by the way, was exactly the same amount I received in 2016. I later learned at the meeting that these beautiful (new?) grants in 2017/2018 will amount to the very same again.



Upon re-reading the lady's note I realized that this was no ordinary small meeting. It was serious. The Premier and the Minister of Community Services would be there! I then tweaked my presentation a bit on my smart phone, adding something about our church and left it at that as it was getting late.

Yet, being there in this little church in the middle of nowhere was an experience neither I nor my driver Steve will soon forget. It was odd to meet Premier Stephen McNeil and other government officials there in that homey surrounding of a warm, welcoming community church. Norm and I had a great time and so did Steven.

It is good to see that this community also must have benefited from the Provincial Disabled Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program as our church did, as will many more Nova Scotians after this kick-off meeting.



Wietske Gradstein

Elizabeth's Chair



When joining Elizabeth at her flat for food and discussion, you could not fail to notice that she preferred to sit in her solid, dark mahogany chair pictured here. The chair was gifted to her when she lived in Montreal, and it followed her to Halifax. Her family has gifted it to the church. It will sit in the library corner of the Ballroom. The chair is now adorned by a plaque in Elizabeth's memory, and in recognition of the contribution she made on the committee that created our covenant. The plaque reads ...

Elizabeth's Chair

From this chair,
Elizabeth welcomed her friends,
sought understanding in fellowship and freedom,
danced as the earth turned,
spoke each other into community and heard herself into being.

Elizabeth Greenhavens 1927-2017

Elizabeth would want you to sit in her chair, so please ... "have a seat."

Allyn Clarke