



**Welcome!**

Everyone is welcome to services in the sanctuary in person. Masks are available on the welcome table and are recommended.

**To access our services remotely:**

Click this [Zoom](#) link which is the same every week. The link can also be found at the top left of our webpage at uuch.ca. ID: 666 004 431 Password: 010670. Or you can watch the service (live or later) at: [UUCH-YouTube](#)

**Our Services This Month**

(at 10:30 am except as otherwise noted)

**December 3 — Why Can't We Have Christmas the Whole Year Round?**

Join Amy in a discussion of poverty issues that are still with us the other 364 days of the year. **Service Leader: Amy Moonshadow**

**December 10 — We'll Have a Bluesy Christmas**

For several years we have conducted a Blue Christmas service to acknowledge feelings of loss, loneliness, or economic hardship during the holiday season. Our service will be held at UUCH with the Afterchoir and Jessica Friesen utilizing songs, readings and ritual to reflect on themes of solace and hope. **Service Leader: James Morris**

**December 17 — Our Traditional Candlelight Service at 3:30 pm**

Between Christian liturgy, rampant secular consumerism, and a message of peace and love in a world of conflict, does it sometimes feel absurd to celebrate this so largely as Unitarian Universalists? Come reflect and celebrate a UU Christmas with joy. **N.B.** This service will be intentionally intergenerational. Finger food and jollity will follow!

**Service Leader: Pam Griffin-Hody**

**December 21 — Winter Solstice Service, Thursday at 7 pm**

This service for all ages will acknowledge the longest night of the year and celebrate the return of the light. Join us for an evening ritual of candlelight, story, music, and song.

**Service Leaders: Katherine Hutka and family**

**December 24 — Readings and Carols**

A quiet morning of seasonal music and readings as we prepare for the long holiday week. **Service Leader: Mary Lu MacDonald**

**December 31 — Covering Music Nowadays**

As we move from the old to the new, come join Nick Baros-Johnson as he presents covers on some of the popular music of today. We'll sing along and hear commentary on what's going on. **Presented by: Nick Baros-Johnson**

Universalist Unitarian  
Community of Halifax  
5500 Inglis Street  
Halifax NS B3H 1J8

902-429-5500  
uuchurch@eastlink.ca  
uuch.ca

Sunday services  
start at 10:30 am

Our congregation is  
lay led at present

Jessica Friesen  
Music Director















Pam Griffin-Hody  
Board President

Etta Hamm  
Newsletter Editor

All are welcome



# December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1  10 am Bazaar set-up, donor drop-off.	2  10 am to 2 pm 
3  10:30 am service Amy, on Poverty	4  	5  7:00 pm Zoom meeting on Fellowship activities	6	7   Hanukka begins at sundown	8	9  10-11:30 am Brunch
10 10:30 am service After Choir a Bluesy Christmas 	11	12  7 pm Worship meeting	13  6:30 pm Board Meeting	14	15  Hanukka ends	16  10-11:30 am Brunch 
17  3:30 pm Candlelight Service 	18  	19  7:00 pm Caring meeting	20  	21  7:00 pm Winter Solstice Service	22  	23  
24 10:30 am service Readings & Carols	25   <i>It's Christmas Day!</i>	26	27 Newsletter Deadline 	28	29	30  
31 10:30 am service Nick B-J on Pop Music						

**Notes:**

Saturday Brunch will not be held on Dec 2, 23 & 30. Regular dates in January Humanist Group will not meet this due to the Candlelight Service.  
 Tuesday Lunch Bunch is on break until further notice.  
 Thursday night Online Gatherings will not be held this month.



# Notes from Pam . . .



It's been a busy and exciting November around UUCH.

On Thursday night, November 23, we had a huge rainstorm. On Friday morning, even as I cleaned up the water on my own kitchen floor, I was jubilant. Absolutely no phone calls or texts about another leak at 5500 Inglis! If you have donated to the roof capital campaign, thank you. If you would like to – it's not too late! You can e-mail it to [treasurer@uuch.ca](mailto:treasurer@uuch.ca) or drop a cheque in the basket (or even mail it). Please note that it's for the roof.

On November 26, we held a special general meeting to vote on a resolution regarding our name. Despite our collective excitement in August at trying out 'Halifax Unitarians', sober second thoughts were uncomfortable at ignoring the word "universalist". The motion to simply call ourselves "community" rather than "church" passed with only three voting against. Our legal name is still "church" but the new name will appear on our newly revamped website, on our sign, our newsletter, order of service, etc.



Our annual Holiday Bazaar will be held on Saturday, December 2nd, just after you read this. This will be our only fundraiser in 2023, so hopefully it will be a success.

The Worship Committee has been busy planning a full slate of Christmas-related services for December. This includes the return of a Blue Christmas service (on a regular Sunday morning) and two services at special times: The Candlelight Service on Sunday, December 17 at 3:30 pm and a Winter Solstice Service on Thursday, December 21 at 7:00 pm.

We launched our 2024 canvass on November 5, and many thanks to Pam Berman for heading the canvass team once again for the 2024 pledge drive. Pledging helps us to budget, and giving by automatic monthly withdrawals gives us the ability to pay our monthly bills for heat, water, etc. As I write this we are still slightly under our goal. If you haven't been able to touch base with your canvasser, you can reach out to any Board member. If you have relooked at your budget and think you could give a little more, please e-mail [treasurer@uuch.ca](mailto:treasurer@uuch.ca).

I'm sure that I'm not alone at experiencing a bit of sadness sometimes during the holiday season. I miss people who are no longer here, and sometimes that visits me unexpectedly in music. I worry about things I can't change, from weather to my finances. I get overwhelmed by the horrors going on in the world, from people living in tents in our city to global wars. So I try to be intentional about finding joy where I can, in playing Christmas music, or smiling at a Christmas ornament that a child made me long ago or that someone gave me with love.



I wish you all calm in the busyness, some small joys, peace, and the love in our community.

**Pam Griffin-Hody**  
**President, UUCH Board of Directors**



## From the Climate Crisis Team

### ***Good news and not-so-good news – local climate action***

Last week I received two letters from government representatives in response to email campaigns that I had supported. Sometimes you do get answers.

The first one was from Andy Filmore, MP for Halifax, about the issue of infilling on the Northwest Arm.



The Northwest Arm

A number of you may have also got an email message about the same issue, with details of the problems and a call for public input by November 30th. Because of the short timeline we sent that out by uinfo, but it's good to recognize what's going on.

Normally the only body with jurisdiction over infilling into a navigable waterway would be the federal government, but after years of meetings and public pressure Mr. Filmore has let me know about the good news. The HRM Council will now “consider amendments to municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws to restrict water lot infilling on the Northwest Arm”.

Because this involves adjustments to the municipal plans, both a period for comment on the proposal and then a public hearing are required. As Andy has written, and Leslie and Allan Shaw urged during our service on Sunday, public pressure could still be effective with a letter to [Rhys.Burnell@halifax.ca](mailto:Rhys.Burnell@halifax.ca) copied to your councillor. If you have missed the deadline you can still ask Rhys Burnell to be put on the list for notification of the public hearing,

expected in January 2024. Good news, but more work to be done.

The other letter I got from a government representative was not such good news. It was from the Honourable Timothy Halman, the provincial Minister of Environment and Climate Change, explaining to me why the government has not yet put the Coastal Protection Act into effect. I understood that years of work with much consultation was put into the preparation of this act and was approved by all parties in 2019, but it is still waiting for the required regulations to be declared. The current government is now “rethinking how we need to adapt building along the coast.” It sounds as if that Act will be delayed for years, while our coastline and the properties along it suffer through increasing storm surges.

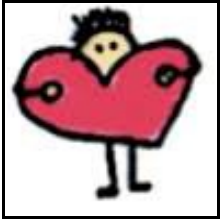
Some campaigns eventually work, and some don't. It would be great if the various levels of government and private owners could work together to protect the headwaters of Sandy Lake, in my area of HRM (Bedford). The Northwest Arm is a very visible asset for Haligonians, but the Sandy Lake and Sackville River region is inland, down a side road, and not known to the casual passerby.



A view of Sandy Lake

Volunteers have worked for decades to have this piece of old growth forest on the shores of a unique deep water lake protected in full, and HRM was very close to the final steps. However, in 2022 the provincial government declared the key pieces of land, through which the headwaters of the lake flow, as essential for housing, with no recourse. But those streams are also essential to the health of the lake, part of which is already protected. We know we desperately need more housing, but surely a compromise could be reached here. Public pressure is all we have left. Want a sign? Request one here! <https://www.sandylakecoalition.ca/take-action>

***Margaret Galbraith  
for the Climate Crisis Team***



## From the Caring Committee

We are sorry to report that **Kath Anthony** has been sick since late October—first with a strong case of COVID, then a bout of gout which was very painful. She said she plans to “lay low” for a bit longer as she gains back her strength. Hope you soon feel much better, Kath!

**Shripad Pendse** announced at our last meeting that he would leave in mid-December for his annual sojourn to India and Australia. However, he later fell on stairs in his apartment building and injured his right foot, causing a small fracture in it. His mobility has been seriously minimized but he expects that his journey may be delayed by only three weeks. Best wishes Shripad, for a good recovery and a great trip.

On Sunday November 19th we celebrated **Barbara Harsanyi's** 90th birthday, both during the service and later with a birthday cake and visitors. Barbara's sister and several of her “ancient Hungarian friends” were there, and *Happy Birthday*, the tune so well-known in many languages, was sung in both English and Hungarian.

**Katherine Hutka**, as requested, has sent us an update on her and her family's plight resulting from their Lower Sackville home being seriously flooded and damaged during the historical rainstorm that occurred on July 22nd. The family comprises Katherine, her husband Adam, and their children Rowan and Miranda, now in their teens.

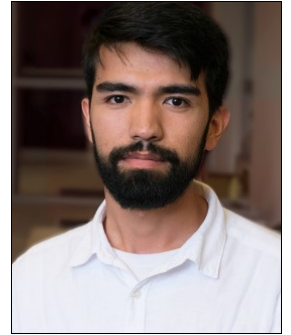
Having spoken with Katherine just days ago, Etta says that Katherine's summary is but a tiny fraction of their ordeal's broader story. Even just locating any help was a challenge due to the community's wide-ranging devastation. Katherine's story is on the next page. Our hearts go out to the Hutka family.

**Sylvia Mattinson**  
for the Caring Committee

## Why I Belong

*We have received this contribution from Mustafa Hussaini, a newcomer to Canada and to our congregation. We look forward to becoming better acquainted with Mustafa in the coming weeks and making him feel welcome. His touching words are more personal and poetic than the column's usual format and we love it!*

### From Mustafa Hussaini recently from Afghanistan



I sometimes like to think of myself as being like Piscine 'Pi' Patel in the bestselling novel *The Life of Pi* by the Canadian novelist Yann Martel. As a kid, Pi was a Hindu, a Muslim, and a Christian—all at the same time. And I sit in Zazen for half an hour every afternoon, come to UU for Sunday services, and can't help my heart from beating fast when I meditate on the Sufi philosophy of universal love found in the poems of Rumi and other Persian mystical poets.

Like Pi, I too had quite a journey coming to Canada, although nothing can beat the experience of travelling on a boat with a Bengal tiger. But most important of all, I too, feel like I am lost in the Pacific sometimes, away from everyone and everything that I once knew. And it is in times like this that belonging to this community matters. As we sing in unison, as we share our joys, sorrows, and complex truths, as we acknowledge the land treaties that made life in peace possible here, as we judge not and as we welcome everyone from every walk of life, I don't feel lost anymore. I feel more at home than ever.



To inquire about contributing to the *Why I Belong* column, please contact Pam Berman, our Membership Chair, at [bermanpj@gmail.com](mailto:bermanpj@gmail.com) or speak with her after a Sunday service. We await *your* story!

## Candlelight and Music

(What could be more wonderful?)

Music in our congregation is like a glue that keeps us together. It is a bond that connects us through celebration and times of joy. More importantly, music helps us mourn and heal together. So, let's join together and navigate this new world through music and song!

Please reach out to me if you would like to participate musically in our **Candlelight Service** on Sunday, December 17th. We'll sing Christmas carols including Silent Night. You don't need to be an amazing singer or musician to be a part of this. It's just a fun way of adding musical variety to our service. All are welcome. Let's be a blessing to others!

Please email me if interested.

[jessicafriesen876@gmail.com](mailto:jessicafriesen876@gmail.com)



**Jessica Friesen**  
**Music Director**

Always remember, music accepts everyone, does not judge, and welcomes you into a safe, therapeutic space of creativity and community!

### Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for submissions for the January newsletter is **Wednesday, December 27th.**

Please send your articles to Etta at [braeside@eastlink.ca](mailto:braeside@eastlink.ca)

## Words Matter

The word church comes from the Old English *circe* like *kerk* in Dutch, and *Kirche* in German, based on the Greek *kuriakon* meaning Lord's House, which comes from the word *kurios* meaning master or lord.

One dictionary defines "community" as "a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society." The word itself comes from the Norman/French *communité* meaning joint ownership or relations, as in a group sharing a cultural identity, itself from the Latin *communitat* meaning joint possession, participation, sharing, social relationship, fellowship, organized society, shared nature or quality, kinship, obligingness. As a group who covenant to the goals of our Eight Principles, it seems to fit. I am pleased at the aspirational quality of calling ourselves the Universalist Unitarian **Community** of Halifax.

**Pam Griffin-Hody**

## From Katherine Hutka

We moved into one room on the second floor of our flood ravaged home in late September. Days later we had partial restoration of power, and so began the work of cleaning the mold that was accumulating. Still living in one room, heat and hot water were restored just before Halloween after months of cold showers, boiling water to wash dishes, and doing laundry off-site. We are still living in that one cramped room.

Much of our losses were irreplaceable, but we are so grateful to those who gave us furniture and various necessities. We rented a truck for a day to pick up beds, mattresses, dressers, a fridge and more. The UU Community offered storage space where we are keeping a few salvaged things and the donated items. After 4.5 months since the flood, we still have not received any insurance funds, nor has our electrician received any reimbursement. The Insurance Bureau of Canada assures us that the timeline is reasonable.

It is all so stressful, both financially and emotionally. We are grateful however, for the support of friends, family, and our UU community. We look forward to the day when we are settled and can pay it forward and donate what was given to us to others who are suffering--while many will still be living in tents throughout the city in winter.

**Katherine Hutka**

Universalist Unitarian  
Community of Halifax  
5500 Inglis Street

# Winter Solstice

Service for all ages

Join us for an evening  
ritual of story, light,  
music, and song.

Thursday

December 21st, 7 p.m. 2023

## Saturday Morning Brunch

*Gleaned from Michael Smith's report to the UUCH semi-annual meeting in October. Thank you for all you do, Michael!*

The UUCH started serving a free brunch on Saturdays 12 years ago, continuing a tradition of helping others and utilizing our UU principles. Roughly 1/3 of our guests are church members; the rest are neighbours and friends from nearby and far



Free online photo

away. With the rise in grocery costs, housing expenses, and food scarcity, the need for programs like this is overwhelming.

UUCH volunteers now are Phil, Michael, Faith and Jessica. Some helpers come from the community at large and range in age from 8 to almost 80. Elia, a one time Argentinian prosecutor, who in her mid 70s works full time at a daycare, shows up every Saturday and makes delicious blueberry pancakes and French toast. Neighbours bring food to share. My daughter Robin and her family usually bring a treat like cakes or cornbread. Brynn, age 11, presented a school report on the UUCH and the brunch, resulting in Timberlea neighbours now dropping of generous amounts of food.

The Parker Street Food Bank gives us a family package twice a month, non-perishables go into the pantry box in the front porch; fresh foods are used in soups, stews and salads that we make.

The UUCH has had the brunch in its budget for some time, plus we get donations from Share the Plate twice twice monthly--and from UUCH members and friends by cheque and electronic money transfers to [treasurer@uuch.ca](mailto:treasurer@uuch.ca). A grateful neighbour donated \$250; Robin's employer donated \$1,070; her husband Scott's work donated \$500; my neighbour donated \$250; Phil had Sobeys Spryfield donate \$50. Brunch neighbours have started to donate as well, slipping us a few bills here and there—which shows how meaningful this program is.

Conversations are lively and last week I noticed one of our regulars chatting in Spanish with a newcomer. It is a diverse group. From one client: "We all have families elsewhere but this is our family too."

## Fellowship Activities Discussion

Anyone interested in exploring community-building Fellowship options is invited to join a Zoom discussion on Tuesday, Dec. 5 at 7 pm, using the link found on the UUCH website homepage, shortcut [here](#). We'll discuss and schedule a few suggested activities such as brown-bag lunch conversations after Sunday Service, Wednesday evening spiritual explorations, BUUK club, games afternoons or evenings, musical jam sessions, and in-home potluck dinners. Bring *your* ideas as well.

**Linda Cherry**

## Church Directory Updates

### New:

Now cell only:

HURD, Molly 902-222-1993  
OSBERG, Lars 902-579-9486

### Repeat updates from this year:

BRITTO, Joe 778-773-0770  
[joebrittomac@gmail.com](mailto:joebrittomac@gmail.com)

HAMM, Etta 902-443-8779  
211-5 Ramsgate Lane  
Halifax, NS B3P 2S6

McMAHON, Sawyer 204-930-3086  
410-83 Kearney Lake Rd  
Halifax NS B3M 4E6 [sawyermac@outlook.com](mailto:sawyermac@outlook.com)

ONNO, Mary Ellen 902-497-6534  
206B-20 Cleary Avenue  
Ottawa, ON K2A 3Z9 [meonno@outlook.com](mailto:meonno@outlook.com)

PENDSE, Shripad [shripen@yahoo.ca](mailto:shripen@yahoo.ca)  
(not @smu.ca)





# WEDNESDAY EVENING IN PERSON GATHERINGS

## Conversation & Virtual Service Viewing

Bring your own dinner & join us for conversation at 7 pm. At 7:30 pm, we will enjoy a live virtual service from The Sanctuary Boston.

Worship services include:

**Music**

**Words of reflection**

**Prayer and meditation**

**Sharing of joys and concerns**

**Candle lighting**

Services led by

**MATT MEYER  
AT THE  
SANCTUARY  
BOSTON**



Join us every 1st, 3rd, and 5th  
Wednesday.

Conversation at 7 pm. Service at  
7:30pm at UUCH

