

Universalist Unitarian  
Church of Halifax  
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Sunday services  
10:30 am  
Online this month

All are welcome

Children & Youth  
Education



## This Month's Sunday Services

Services are currently presented online. Services start at 10:30 am. Please join us via Zoom between 10:20 am and 10:30 am. Use this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/666004431?pwd=RjQvVEtjUjM1MEdnMDgxUjOVSRzVLQT09> Meeting ID: 666 004 431 Password: 010670. You can also watch the service live or later on our UUCH YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3Lw1hW1n7z3mNapa6yY7Jw>

**Attendance in person is being suspended following the recent guidance of the province's Chief Medical Officer in an effort to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus.**

## Our Theme for December: Stillness

**December 6** *When the Power Goes Out* — When the electrical power “goes out” as it will no doubt some time this winter for all of us... the real power of the universe becomes evident... reflections on the power present in silence.

**Service Leader:** Rev. Norm Horofker; **Service Assistant:** Pam Berman

**December 13** *Stillness... One of the Doors Into the Temple* — If there were such a thing as a Universalist Unitarian Temple, there would be many entrances and many places to sit quietly in conversation with another person, and much silence ... and only one exit.

**Service Leader:** Rev. Norm Horofker; **Service Assistant:** Page Wakarchuck

**December 20** *Winter Solstice and Holy Days* — This is a holy time of year for many religious traditions, tied to the longest night of the year and the return of the light. On this Sunday before Christmas we will celebrate a service of stillness with appropriate poetry and music.

**Service Leader:** Rev. Norm Horofker; **Service Assistant:** James Morris

**December 27** *Stillness... Being Comfortable With the Contradictions of Life* — Blaise Pascal, the 17th century French mathematician, physicist, inventor, philosopher, writer and Catholic theologian wrote, “All of humanity’s problems stem from man’s inability to sit quietly in a room alone.” In a world riven with contradictory voices, what does it mean to sit silently alone as we prepare for 2021? **Service Leader:** Rev. Norm Horofker; **Service Assistant:** Mary Lu MacDonald



**Special Note on our annual Blue Christmas Service at Bearly’s House of Blues: At press time it is clear that we can not have an in-person service at Bearly’s this year, but we are working on a possible online Blue Christmas service streamed live from Bearly’s. Watch for developments.**

## The Theme for January: Imagination

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



# December 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 	2 9 pm Black Lives Matter, CUC online	3 7-8 pm Online chat	4 6:00-7:30 pm Ubuntu ARTful Fundraiser for Refugee Sponsorship. Online	5 10-11:30 am Neighbourhood Brunch take-out  2 pm How Shall We Gather? CUC online
6 10:30 am Online Service  5 pm Connect & Deepen, CUC online	7	8	9  6:30 pm Board meeting	10 7-8 pm Online chat  3 pm Gathered Here, CUC online	11	12 10-11:30 am Neighbourhood Brunch take-out  
13 10:30 am Online Service	14	15	16  Distanced caroling	17 7-8 pm Online chat	18	19 10-11:30 am Neighbourhood Brunch take-out  5 pm Youth & Emerging Adults of Colour, CUC online
20 10:30 am Online Service  5 pm Connect & Deepen, CUC online	21 	22 	23 	24 	25  <i>It's Christmas day!</i>	26 
27 10:30 am Online Service	28  Newsletter deadline	29 	30 	31 	January 1, 2021 	2 

See [cuc.ca](http://cuc.ca) for details of all CUC online events.

# Minister's Notes



**December's  
theme: Stillness...  
an opportunity to  
reflect and learn**

December 2020... the last month in a very challenging year. There are few times in my long life, when a new year was more welcome, even as we face great uncertainty about what it may bring. I, for one, am ready to get on with it, move quickly through the holiday season (as limited as it will be) and put this whole year behind me.

But before we write off this experience we should stop and reflect on what we have learned. Here is my partial list.

**First**, our community is innovative and resilient. We did not stop holding Sunday services. We did not miss a single service. We found a whole new way to be together on Sunday mornings and our services will be better for it even after the pandemic. We experimented and found ways to use online platforms in ways that were entirely new. We bought new hardware and learned how to use it all. Our Music Director, Jessica, led our singing from her own apartment, and John Piccolo directed it all from his basement control room.

We hosted the first live Cross Canada Sunday service with over 1,000 participants.

Our Caring Committee went back to older technology... the telephone tree, to keep in touch with members and friends who did not have ready access to computers. For those who had the technology, we started a weekly online social gathering on Thursday nights.

Marie-Claude, our RE Director, found ways to meet our children online and provided packages for families to use at home. More recently the children's RE programs have become outdoor family field trips.

We did not stop serving Saturday Brunch to our neighbours, we switched overnight to a brown bag takeout lunch.

We launched the most significant Adult Religious Exploration program that we have undertaken in my time as your minister... UU Wellspring, and we had more applicants than we could accommodate in this pilot project.

**Second**, our community is strong. Attendance at Sunday services has held constant since the pandemic began. We are just completing our annual pledge drive, and early indications are that we have an encouraging level of support.

**Third**, our community is bold. In the middle of a pandemic, when many congregations are contracting in fear, our Board brought forward a budget with a significant new initiative to raise the pay level of our staff, moving in two steps toward the goal of a "living wage."

**Fourth**, our community is patient and hopeful. Everyone is looking forward to the end of this pandemic and the return to gathering in the sanctuary, real coffee hour, and greeting one another in person without masks.

When the year began, we were preparing for hosting the national Canadian Unitarian Council conference in Halifax. We accepted the inevitable postponement of that event but signed up to be the first venue when in-person conferences are again possible.

**Fifth**, Our Canadian society is loving and strong. The vast majority of our fellow citizens have been willing to make extraordinary sacrifices for the well being of others, particularly those most vulnerable to this disease. And our government has been willing to take a huge risk by offering unprecedented financial support.

I invite you to take some time in the stillness of your home, to reflect on what you have learned from the pandemic experience. I would love to hear from you. It will give me inspiration for our year-end service.

In 2021 may we build on what we have learned.

With Love,

**The Reverend Norm Horofker**

## Canvass Report

Our Canvass for our 2021 Budget has gone very well this year, so far. We did extremely well over the first 10 days of the event, with the canvass team busy and people responding generously. Many of you increased your pledges for 2021, for which we are very grateful. Our plan to work towards paying our staff a living wage seems to be supported.

As usual, it then slows down over the rest of the month. We had 73% of our goal of \$124,445 by November 8th, but have increased that to only 88% as of this writing on November 24th. A number of people have yet to be contacted, so we are hopeful that we can still attain our planned amount.

We had hoped to get even a tiny pledge from each of our members this year. However, a number of you have not felt comfortable taking that step. We understand that circumstances are particularly difficult during this pandemic, but you may think of other ways to contribute once we get back to more normal meetings: greeting, ushering, making coffee on Sunday mornings, helping with the RE program, volunteering with a social action committee – all roles that help to strengthen our UUCH community.



**Our 11-hands handstack, as we look forward to \$111,000 or more!  
Thanks to the Saulnier family for lending their hands to the cause.**

If you have not yet heard from your canvasser, please check your email or your phone for a message. If nothing, then please contact me at [margalbraith@eastlink.ca](mailto:margalbraith@eastlink.ca) or 902-835-3767.

If you have been in discussion with your canvasser and meant to get back to them with a decision, please do that too!

Thank you all so much for your generosity, now and in the future.

***Margaret Galbraith***  
***Canvass Chair***



## UUCH SAH News, Dec 2020

### The World of Refugee Sponsorship

We belong to the Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) Council which, along with Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada (IRCC) held virtual national meetings in late October/early November. The usual in-person format of a 3-day conference was converted to eight 3-hour webinar sessions spread over 2½ weeks. Talk about Zoom fatigue!

However, here is a brief recap of things we learned from this year's conference.

**TRAVEL** – Still not much happening – only those refugees who were given their Permanent Resident Visas before the March lockdown are coming at this time. For us that has meant 3 individuals who arriving here between Sept 24th and Dec 3rd. I am calling this current period the Refugee Doldrums. No good idea of when it will end.

**2021 PROJECTIONS** – Even though IRCC currently has 47,000 refugees in process (we are waiting for 70 from 2018 & 19 alone), the federal government has announced spaces for 36,000 more in 2021. In these uncertain times, it is hard to imagine how many years it will take to clear the backlog of 47,000 before the next 36,000 can be processed.

#### FACTS AND FIGURES

79.5 million displaced persons worldwide  
85% of them are hosted by developing countries  
40% are children  
However, only 1.4 million are apparently in need of “resettlement”

In other words, most refugees will find “durable solutions”, either remaining where they have taken refuge or actually returning home once the war, the famine, the threats have passed. Thus, people find themselves in places like the Dadaab and Kakuma Refugee Camps in Kenya for decades. These two camps account for a total of over 400,000 refugees.

#### IMPROVING THE PROGRAM?

Much of the conference was devoted to talking about a Program Integrity Framework. IRCC is working with the SAH Council to develop a framework for the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program while SAHs feel that puts the cart



Dadaab & Kakuma refugee camp hopefuls awaiting resettlement

before the horse, and that serious changes need to be made to the program design first. For example, the PSR program was originally intended for community groups to “welcome the stranger” but now almost all of our requests are “family-linked – new Canadians wishing to bring family members. It is time to redesign it to acknowledge this change. As we are small cogs in a big system, IRCC will doubtless prevail.

They are also planning to change the requirements so that SAHs and their refugee sponsors must prove their financial capacity to sponsor prior to submitting the applications. The only question is whether this will be on a case-by-case basis or an organizational basis. (We already require our sponsors to have at least 75% of the required funds before we submit their applications but not all SAHs do.)

#### READY AND WILLING

Our small volunteer-run SAH is on standby – waiting to hear that families are on their way; waiting to hear what new hoops IRCC would like us to jump through; ready for the challenges!

**Marilyn Shinyei**  
**Co-chair, UUCH SAH**

## How Much?

### How much does Refugee Sponsorship cost?

*Sponsoring a refugee or refugee family through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program can be a wonderfully fulfilling experience, but there are costs involved. The biggest one is the funds required to support the family during their first year in Canada.*

Sponsoring groups are responsible to make sure their refugees' rent, food, clothing, furniture, telephone & utilities, public transport, school supplies and fees, and other living expenses are met for 12 months after the date of arrival, since refugees cannot access any public income support (like social assistance) during this time. However, all are covered under our socialized health care system and children can go to school. Also, in-kind donations (like donated furniture) can also reduce the amount of funds needed.

How do we calculate the amount needed? There is a minimum amount required by the government which this depends on, things like:

- family size;
- the community of settlement, since living expenses such as rent can be quite different in different cities and provinces across the country;
- family circumstances, such as whether there are children in the family, whether there are any disabilities, a new baby, etc.

The amount needed can be calculated using the [RSTP Minimum Financial Support Calculator](#).

As one of Nova Scotia's largest refugee sponsoring organizations, UUCH is helping dozens of community groups in Nova Scotia to help settle and reunite scores of refugee families. These groups are generally raising their own money for these undertakings. However, one of these families is our own undertaking: Clement and Sylvie with their two children are a Unitarian family from Rwanda, hopefully arriving in 2021 or soon thereafter. To date, **\$23,133** has been raised for their settlement, and some in-kind donations have also been received. Included here is a sample budget for this sponsorship which may help illustrate what a refugee undertaking budget might look like, generally.

Sponsorship of Couple & 2 children	
<b>Start-up costs (1-time)</b>	
RSTP calculator	6,810
In-kind donations*	-4,610
<b>Subtotal Start-up</b>	<b>2,200</b>
<b>Monthly costs (12 months)</b>	
Basic Needs (food, clothing, etc)	550
Housing	820
Communication	30
Transportation	156
<b>Per month \$</b>	<b>1,556</b>
<b>Subtotal Monthly costs (1556 x 12)</b>	<b>18,672</b>
<b>Grand Total (with in-kind donations)</b>	<b>19,000</b>
<b>Grand Total (no in-kind donations)</b>	<b>25,482</b>

As you can see, this really is a *minimum* support calculation; it is a tight budget to live on. Start-up costs include one-time expenses such as furniture, housewares, hook-up costs for utilities, and the like. They can be reduced to \$2,200 if donations are provided; otherwise we can expect to need \$6,810. Monthly income support is bare-bones: \$820 for rent costs and \$550 for things like food, clothing, and other necessities for the month. However, there may be a free HRM bus pass provided which could reduce transportation costs.

As the sample budget here shows, **\$25,482** is needed to sponsor our family – and we need only another **\$2,349** to reach that! If we are able to get *all* the allowable in-kind donations (\$4,610) we may already have the minimum. If you can help put us over the top, please send an eTransfer to [treasurer@uuch.ca](mailto:treasurer@uuch.ca) and mention Refugee Fund on the memo line. Thank you!

**Andy Blair**  
**Co-chair, UUCH SAH**

## The Caring Column

### What's NEW

**Irene Baros-Johnson** reports good news; her writing group, Evergreen Writers, has just released a book called "Waters Edge". Included in the book is a poem by Irene about the town of Minudie and the UU community there. Congratulations, Irene!

**Barbara Harsanyi** also reports happy news. Her granddaughter Anna, and Anna's husband, Eric Perlinger, are pleased to announce the arrival of their son, and Barbara's great grandson, Alexander Charles Johann Perlinger, on November 14th. All are healthy and happy.

### What's NEXT

I had to get a COVID test on Tuesday the 24th and arrived at 7:45 pm—but the staff were there from 7:30 am and the lineup continued as I left at 9:30 pm! The next day my surgeon's office called to say that my knee surgery scheduled for November 26th was cancelled—not by COVID but because of some other emergency. The surgery is estimated to take place in early January—but that's better than COVID!

Best wishes for a happy and healthy season to end this challenging year, and for continuing health for all into 2021. Happy New Year!

**Sylvia Mattinson**



We'll be thinking of you, Sylvia, and wishing you a speedy recovery!

## COVID-19 Restrictions Update

Greetings, everyone.

Unfortunately, due to the rise in COVID-19 cases in Halifax, Dr. Strang has placed additional restrictions for everyone's safety.



As a result, we will be moving the **Saturday brunch** program back to bag lunches given at the door with no entry permitted.

In addition **all services and functions** at the church will return to virtual services. Only 5 staff (or less) to facilitate virtual events will be allowed in the building at one time.

Since daycares are currently not affected, the Halifax Early Childhood School that occupies our second floor will continue, following provincial guidelines.

I know this is disappointing, but we have been expecting a second wave – and we will get through this together. Remember, physical not social distancing.

Stay connected and stay safe everyone.

**Troy Saulnier**  
**UUCH Board President**

**DEADLINE**

The deadline for submissions for the  
**JANUARY NEWSLETTER**  
is **12 noon**  
**Monday, December 28th.**

Please send your submissions to  
Etta Hamm, [braeside@eastlink.ca](mailto:braeside@eastlink.ca)



# ***Religious Exploration for Children & Youth***

We have continued to enjoy our Religious Exploration program outdoors this past month with each outing deepening our connection to nature. While exploring the Sixth Source of our living tradition, we are learning to live our Seventh Principle to respect the interdependent web of all existence.



It is by connecting and appreciating the natural world that we grow to care and protect it. While armed with a list of items to scavenge, the children led the way, far off the path, and we adults followed. The children were the ones who pointed out fungi from the miniscule to enormous; who wondered about crevices in trees; who bounced on (and through!) swathes of moss. Amidst this, each child triumphantly checked off all of the sought after natural items.

While learning about seed dispersal, the children channeled their inner squirrels to forage and hide acorns. They learned about how trees and shrubbery need woodland animals as much as the animals rely on their seeds for sustenance. They compared native and non-native oak and chestnut trees. They pricked their fingers on chestnut burrs, and rolled down hills. What else is a child to do when presented with a hill?

Respecting the interdependent web of all existence is more than caring for our planet earth, it also speaks to the connections we have to our fellow human beings, in all communities, and across time. By celebrating Samhain, we paused to honor each other's ancestors and lost loved ones. We were reminded that where we find ourselves has been greatly influenced by our ancestors' decisions. By exploring Mi'kmaq petroglyphs, we were reminded that we were standing on ancestral lands – lands that have been honored and treated as sacred by many for thousands of years. These reminders attest that the choices we make with our lives have impact for generations to come.



This coming month may be a little different as we navigate the second wave of Covid-19. For the next couple of weeks we won't be meeting together outside. I hope our virtual gatherings will inspire each family to continue to spend time outdoors connecting with each other, and surrounded by nature.

***Marie-Claude Leroux***  
***Director***  
***Religious Exploration for Children & Youth***



# ***The Music Page***



## ***Welcome to a new month of music!***

**The winter season** is a time for carols, traditional food, snow, and most importantly, family and friends. This December we embark on a new Christmas journey. A journey of togetherness in a lonely and isolated world. Let us be grateful for the technology that connects us when we are far away physically. Please continue to tune in to our Sunday services and be inspired together through the message and the music.

### **Coffeehouse**

The virtual Coffeehouse was a success due to our wonderful technician, John Piccolo, and our lovely musicians and poets. Thank you to all participants and our congregation and friends who attended virtually!

### **Soulful Sundown featuring Tall Poppy**

Soulful Sundown is a reflective and spiritual Zoom service including music, poetry, and art. Musician Tall Poppy will be featured on Saturday, January 30th. Previous musicians have included George Woodhouse and Jont Openheart. If you have artwork, poetry, or readings to share, please contact me.

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



***Jessica Friesen***

***Music Director***

***jessicafriesen876@gmail.com***

***204-330-8165***



**In Between Stories:**

# **An Ubuntu ARTful Fundraiser** *for Refugee Sponsorship*

We invite you to enjoy an artful evening of music and poetry to raise awareness and funds for shaping the stories of the people in between places and in between stories.

*Matching funds:* Every dollar raised is being generously matched by the Shapiro Foundation; a \$20 donation amounts to \$40 for sponsorship to Halifax.

*Charitable tax receipts:* Issued by CanadaHelps in the name of UUCH for donations over \$20. 100% of funds go towards refugee resettlement. Ubuntu is a Constituent Group of UUCH.

*Photo print auction:* All proceeds from the striking photo artwork (by the refugees themselves) sold during the event will go directly to refugees being sponsored.

Music, poetry, art & stories by: Jessica Friesen, Amer, Patrick Maubert, and Tiffany Morris.

**ubuntu**  
CANADA REFUGEE

**Join us online! Friday Dec. 4th from 6 - 7:30pm**

**Tickets & link: [www.tiny.cc/5oh5tz](http://www.tiny.cc/5oh5tz)**



**Season's Greetings from your  
Board of Directors**

**Officers**

President	Troy Saulnier
Vice-President	Jean-François Turcotte
Past President	Margaret Galbraith
Secretary	Pam Griffin-Hody
Treasurer	Avard Woolaver

**Members at Large**

Jim Morrison	Katherine Hutka
Michael Belland	Katelyn Everson

**Ex-officio**

Rev. Norm Horofker, Minister

*Merry Christmas Happy Hanukkah  
e'ed al meelaad al sae'd  
Happy Kwanzaa Joyeux Noël  
Feliz Navidad Happy New Year!*







Image of Maud Lewis's "Covered Bridge", featured as one of Canada Post's Christmas stamps this year.