



January Worship

With Christmas business and laziness getting in the way, our final two services for January are still TBA. The Worship Committee will let you know the details once they are finalized.

The Zoom link stays the same from week to week and can be found at the top left of our webpage at uuch.ca. If you need an ID and Password it's: ID: 666 004 431 Password: 010670

Our Services This Month

January 7 – The Art of Gratitude

Mormon religious leader, James E. Faust said “A grateful heart is a beginning of greatness. It is an expression of humility. It is a foundation for the development of such virtues as prayer, faith, courage, contentment, happiness, love, and well-being.” In this service Joe Britto will help us explore the art of gratitude for the year that has gone and for the year about to start. **Service Leader: Joe Britto**

January 14 – To be or not to be – and ChatGPT: How is AI shaping our understanding of what it means to be human?

The advent of AI and chatbots has opened a whole new area of ethics. In what ways is artificial intelligence pushing us to strengthen our ethical and theological muscles? What do our answers to these questions say about our understanding of what it means to be human, especially the ways in which this understanding impacts our relations with other humans and with the other-than-human world. **Speaker: Rev. Karen Fraser Gitlitz, Saskatoon Unitarians; Service Leader: Marilyn Shinyei**

January 21 – TBA

January 28 – TBA

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.

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



Ring in the New Year!

JANUARY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Religious Exploration (RE) resumes on Sunday, the 7th. See Pam's notice inside.</p>	<p>1</p> 	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> 	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p> <p>10 - 11:30 am Brunch resumes</p> 
<p>7</p> <p>10:30 Service Gratitude Joe Britto</p> 	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p> <p>7 pm Worship Team meeting</p>	<p>10</p> <p>6:30 pm Board meeting</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p> <p>10 - 11:30 am Brunch</p>
<p>14</p> <p>10:30 Service Artificial Intelligence Rev. Karen Fraser Gitlitz</p> 	<p>5</p> <p>Martin Luther King Day</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> 	<p>18</p> <p>v</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p>10 - 11:30 am Brunch</p> <p>1:00 – 3:30 pm Herbal Workshop</p> 
<p>21</p> <p>10:30 Service TBA</p> <p>Noon Humanist Group</p> 	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p> <p>v</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p>10 – 11:30 am Brunch</p>
<p>28</p> <p>10:30 Service TBA</p> <p>Last Sunday BYO Bag Lunch conversation</p> 	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> 			



An optimist stays up at midnight to see the new year in.
A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves.

Wm E. Vaughan

From the Caring Committee

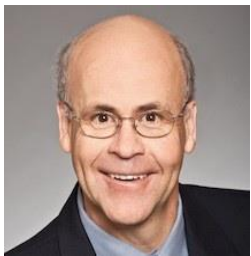


It was good to see **Kath Anthony** back for Sunday services after a bad case of COVID followed by a painful bout of gout.

Shripad Pendse has made noticeable progress in his recovery from the fracture in his foot resulting from a fall. He expects to be traveling for his annual visits to India and Australia in mid-January.



We are sorry to report that during December two long-term members of UUCH died.



Our **Dr. Jim Barker** died suddenly on December 2nd. He was a strong supporter of the UUCH over the years. A moving Celebration of Life was held here on December 14th. Deep condolences to Jim's family.

Ella Wilson, active member of the UUCH for many years, recently suffered a rapid decline in health and died at St. Vincent's Nursing Home in Halifax on December 17th. A celebration of Ella's life will take place at the UUCH at a later date.



And now a new year begins, and we extend the best of wishes for 2024 to everyone in our community.

Happy New Year!

Faith, Shripad and Sylvia



From the Reconciliation and Dismantling Racism Committee



This is a good time to reflect on what's happened over the last year while anticipating the future. We were fortunate to have three thought-provoking services at the UUCH with presentations by Robert Wright, Dr. Lynn Jones and William Johnson/Sulia'n as well as an after-service conversation on being an ally led by Andrea Currie.

We became more aware of the annual cycle of events that include: February's African Heritage Month, the Emerging Lens Cultural Film Festival in April, Red Dress Day in May putting the spotlight on Missing and Murdered Women, June's National Indigenous History Month, July's Africville Reunion, September's Orange Shirt Day or the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and October's Mi'kmaq History month.

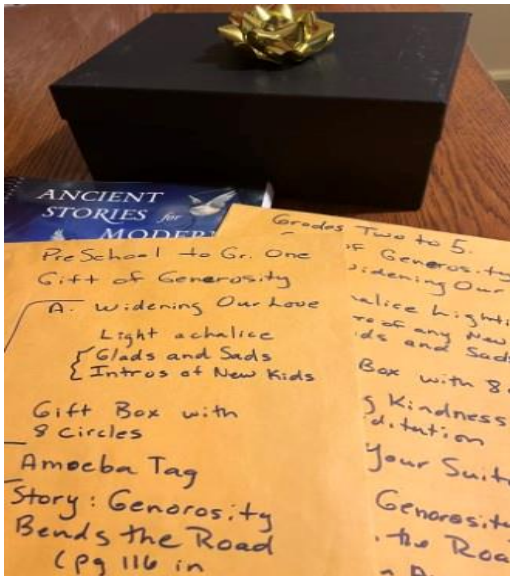
Many wonderful community events inspired individual UUCH members, including "Portia White: A Vibrant Presence"; "Five Poets Breaking into Song"; Sylvia Hamilton's Book Launch for "Tender", her latest book of poems; El Jones' book launch for "Abolitionist Intimacies" and Africville's annual reunion and service. But the one that engaged more of us than any other was the North American Indigenous Games that brought thousands of young indigenous athletes to our province.

We look forward to joining other UU members in attending similar events over the coming months. We can start by keeping an eye and ear open for activities around Martin Luther King Day on January 15th. We will also keep an eye on opportunities to show solidarity with our Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian neighbours as they organize events to advance their rights.

Brian Gifford
Chair, RDR Committee

Back to Religious Exploration for Children, January 7th

In 2024 our community will be offering an RE program for any children who attend. It's loosely based on a curriculum provided through the Soul Matters material that UUCH subscribes to. It discusses various types of 'gifts': Gifts of Generosity, Gifts of Gratitude, etc. There will be an RE bin in either the minister's study or the admin office with a 'gift box' containing an outline, a story, possible activities—and if all else fails, colouring pages and play dough.



Now all we need are volunteers. If you sign up for a Sunday and no children show up, you will be free to return to the service. If children show up, you can grab the RE bin, take the little ones either upstairs or to the minister's study. If a package is used we'll put an X on it, and maybe write the names of the children who took part.

I will cover Jan 7th. If anyone wants to take on the 14th, the 21st or 28th, please let me know.

Pam Berman
bermanpj@gmail.com

Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for submissions for the February newsletter is **Thursday, January 25th.**

Please send your articles on time to Etta at braeside@eastlink.ca



Last-Sunday BYOB Lunches

Following Thanksgiving potluck and Canvass Kick-off Lunch, several members and friends lingered for quite a while in lively conversations. There was a request to create such opportunities on a regular basis.

So, welcome to Last Sunday Bring Your Own Bag Lunches **starting Jan 28**. These will be no-host events. Bring your own self-contained bag lunch and beverage. If you use the kitchen, clean up after yourself. No dirty dishes left in the sink. Stay as long as you like, making new friends and connecting with old ones.

The intent is for these to be monthly gatherings. Join us for the fellowship.

Linda Cherry
Fellowship

Humanists Gather, January 21

UUCHumanists will resume our third Sunday gatherings at noon on Jan 21st. Irene and Mary Lu will continue reviewing Humanism's European and North American histories. The curious are welcome!



Raising our Roof Capital Campaign

The roof is all done but we still need money to pay for it. The total was nearly \$70,000.

(This includes the cost of fixing our chimneys which the roofers reported as needing repairs.)



Please consider a donation to help us pay off this large debt by putting a cheque in an envelope (in the collection or by snail mail), or send an e-transfer to treasurer@uuch.ca Either way, please note "for the roof." Many thanks!



Maritime School of
Holistic Herbalism

Universalist Unitarian
Community of Halifax



RISING TO THE HEALTH CHALLENGES OF OUR TIMES WITH HERBAL MEDICINE

Free workshop (by donation)

Saturday January 20

1:00 - 3:30pm

5500 Inglis Street

Halifax



You will learn about:

- Core herbal philosophies and tools
- Herbs that support immunity
- How to connect with teachers and resources
- Integrating herbal medicine in your life
- PLUS - sample some herbs to learn hands-on!

REGISTER AT

www.maritimeherbschool.com/workshops



Donations will support the Universalist Unitarian
Community's *Saturday Brunch Program*



Saturday Brunch, Part 2

Following-up on our adaptation of Michael Smith's report to the October SAGM in last month's issue of the newsletter, we present Part 2, this time with photographs and yet more (amazing) facts. – Etta

Coordinated by Kath Anthony, the Saturday Brunch was going very nicely for a number of years; it was a popular, lively, well-oiled machine until early 2020. Then the pandemic hit. During the darkest days of the pandemic we switched to a take-out bagged lunch program that Kath coordinated very well, and resourcefully. She arranged for the Parker Street Food Bank to donate boxes of food that included sliced meat with which we made sandwiches. The take-out helped feed people but was not as successful socially for volunteers nor our clients.

Eased restrictions allowed us to resume the brunch in September 2022. UUCH member volunteers are Michael (now coordinator), Phil Silver and Faith Piccolo. Michael's family the Smith-Armstrongs round out our work force. Michael, her daughter Robin, and her granddaughters are in the photo on the right. Robin's husband Scott brings in tools so that when he is not needed to wash dishes he does yard work and the like. The family bring in treats like cakes or cornbread. Neighbours bring bags of food. Some come early to set up tables.

Brunch staples are pancakes or French toast; bacon, sausages and bologna; oatmeal, fruit, salad; juice, coffee, tea; cookies, cakes; rolls, cornbread and crackers. No one goes away hungry!

Parker Street gives us a family package twice a month which supplements the food box, and is used for soups, stews and salads that we make. We use everything that comes to us. Oatmeal becomes oatmeal raisin cookies, crusts become stuffing or bread pudding, bananas become banana bread. Soups and casseroles made by Michael, Robin or Faith use the items that neighbours cannot use in 'bedroom cooking'. We have also had a few ethnic meals made by clients. It's a collaborative effort that everyone enjoys.

The brunch is funded solely by donations (not the UUCH). You can give any time via e-transfer to treasurer@uuch.ca; or send a cheque to the church, address on the first page of this newsletter. Please remember to note "for the brunch." Big thanks!



UUsers Cynthia Marshall & Jessica Friesen with two 'regulars' happy to pose for the newsletter.



Michael Smith, coordinator (volunteering since way back), daughter Robin, and granddaughters Brynn and Evelyn, both totally committed to promoting the brunch and helping on Saturdays.



Elia (the former Argentinian prosecutor mentioned last month) comes faithfully every Saturday to make her much loved blueberry pancakes and French toast.

Kindness costs nothing but it means everything. ~ Unknown



From the Climate Crisis Team

Divesting from fossil fuels

At [the end of COP28](#) in Dubai, world governments finally recognized the need to “transition away from fossil fuels” but failed to acknowledge the need for a phaseout of coal, oil and gas. In response, 1,600+ institutions, representing \$40.6 trillion in assets, announced that they are divesting from fossil fuels. (See [STAND.earth](#))

Fossil fuel divestment spans every sector of society. For example, the Swiss pension fund CPEG, the UK’s Wiltshire Pension Fund, and the largest private pension fund in the Netherlands are the latest to join the movement. In 2023 alone, major divestment commitments were made by the Church of England, New York University, the National Academy of Medicine, and Triodos Bank.

Do you own investments?

That’s a personal question but a very relevant one in this climate emergency. Fingers are pointed at our governments for supporting fossil fuel companies with subsidies and loan guarantees, etc, yet shouldn’t we also look at our own potential culpability? If we are fortunate enough to have mutual fund investments and the like, should we not look closely into exactly where our money goes?

Many banks offer investments using “Environmental, Social, Governance” (ESG) screens to supposedly avoid unethical corporations. Unfortunately, there is no universal understanding of what these ESG statements mean in detail. Claims of offering “green” funds with progressive sustainable initiatives can be misleading to the untrained eye. This makes it very difficult to avoid fossil fuels completely.

However, our financial adviser was able to find mutual funds without any fossil fuel companies, period; and we feel better for having made the switch to fossil free. For your own peace of mind, why not check this out yourself?



If you would like more information, call me: 902-742-5542.

Leslie Robinson
for the Climate Crisis Team

We are Canadian Unitarians and Universalists



We are people of many paths who are brave, curious, and compassionate thinkers and doers. We are diverse in faith, ethnicity, history, and spirituality, but are aligned in our desire to make a difference for the good.

We have radical roots and a history as self-motivated spiritual people. We think for ourselves, and we recognize that life experience is the strongest influence on our beliefs.

We live our values in our work for social justice. Unitarian Universalists have advocated for affordable housing, choice in dying, and world peace. We sponsor refugees and seek truth, healing, and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. We work for racial justice, criminal justice, and climate justice. And for more than forty years we have been at the forefront of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer inclusion.

We are called to love and justice through our interdependence on each other and on the world around us. We aspire to be deeply connected, radically inclusive, actively engaged, theologically alive, and spiritually grounded.

We seek to welcome you, your whole self, with all your truths and your doubts, your worries and your hopes. Find out what it means to live your deepest values out loud. Join us on this extraordinary adventure of faith.

With thanks to the [Unitarian Universalist Association](#)

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eNews (editor's note)

Are you a CUC eNews subscriber? Perhaps not, if you are new to the denomination. eNews is the CUC's digital monthly newsletter, connecting and informing Canada's Unitarian Universalists on matters of denominational, national and global interest. Once you subscribe to eNews you may be amazed to discover the depth and breadth of the CUC's values, its proactive social justice advocacy, and its commitment of support to its 44+ member congregations. One eNews feature is a summary of the CUC's learning and self-development opportunities it offers through online sessions.

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January 6: Feast of the Epiphany ...

a religious holiday observed primarily by Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Anglican Christians. It commemorates the Three Kings (Wise Men, or Magi) who, led by a star, traversed afar to visit their messiah born in a manger in the little town of Bethlehem. *Epiphany: a sudden knowing or realization.*



“We three kings of orient are
Bearing gifts, we traverse afar
Field and fountain
Moor and mountain
Following yonder star . . . ”