

U.U. & you

newsletter of the universalist unitarian church of halifax

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November 2017

Universalist Unitarian
Church of Halifax
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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 November: Identity and Story

November 5

Presenter: Rev. Norm Horofker; Service Assistant: Martha Wilson

Identity and Meaning – Does One Imply the Other?

On this “Pledge Sunday” Norm will explore the connection between our sense of identity and our desire to find meaning in our lives. Norm often repeats from the pulpit that our congregation is a place where “...we choose to give meaning to our lives.” Does that statement resonate with you?

November 12

Presenter: Mary Lu MacDonald; Service Leader: Margaret Galbraith

Who am I? Who are WE? Who are They?

After a long life of interest, both personal and professional, in the questions of identity, Mary Lu will share some thoughts and questions on the subject. How do time and place of birth, nature and nurture, influence who we are?

November 19

Presenter: Rev. Norm Horofker; Service Assistant; Marilyn Shinyei

Our Identity is Shaped by Our Connections... and our Disconnections

To what extent is our identity shaped by those we choose to be with, and those we choose to avoid? What motivates us when we choose our friends and enemies, and are we choosing wisely?

November 26

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

Once Upon a Time We Were a Church

In November we celebrate the 180th anniversary of the founding of “The Universalist Unitarian **Church** of Halifax” in 1837. Actually we were officially incorporated as The First Universalist **Church** of Halifax in 1843. Are we still a “**Church**?” Should we continue to be a “**Church**?”

Our theme for next month (December): Presence

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.



November 2017

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|-----------|---|--|-----------|---|
|  | | | 1 4:45-6:15 pm Afterchoir | 2 9:30-11:30 am Parents & Tots Noon Tai Chi | 3 | 4 10 am – noon UU Brunch |
| 5 9:30 No Choir Commitment Sunday 12 pm Worship Committee | 6 | 7 | 8 4:45-6:15 pm Afterchoir | 9 9:30-11:30 am Parents & Tots Noon Tai Chi | 10 | 11 10 am -noon UU Brunch  |
| 12 9:30 am Choir 12 pm Social Responsibility | 13 | 14 | 15 4:45-6:15 pm Afterchoir | 16 9:30-11:30 am Parents & Tots Noon Tai Chi | 17 | 18  10-2 Xmas Bazaar East River Hike |
| 19 9:30 am Choir 12 Noon Humanist Group | 20 | 21 | 22 4:45-6:15 pm Afterchoir | 23 9:30-11:30 am Parents & Tots Noon Tai Chi 6:30 Board meeting | 24 | 25 10 am – noon UU Brunch 6-9pm DUP |
| 26 9:30 am Choir 12 pm Intro to UUism with Rev. Norm | 27 10 am Newsletter Deadline | 28 | 29 4:45-6:15 pm Afterchoir | 30 9:30-11:30 am Parents & Tots Noon Tai Chi | | |

Sunday Nov 5th is Commitment Sunday

The theme for this year's Annual Budget Drive is "A Fine Balance".

Join us after church for a free Soup & Bread Luncheon, minimal speechifying and great entertainment with the Afterchoir.

You will be able to meet with your canvasser and make your pledge that day, or make plans to get together later for a calmer personalized visit together.



The Canvass Team: Marilyn Shinyei, Glenda Butt, Darla Muzzerall

Minister's Notes



November as Pledge Month

Given the spectacularly beautiful weather we have had in October, I am making a special pledge... ***I will not complain about the weather for the entire month of November no matter what!*** We have much to be thankful for and this month weather has been way up on my list.

It was a delight for Janet and me to have the Reverend Anthony Makar as a guest in our home for one week in October and as noted the weather cooperated wonderfully. Anthony was the supervising minister for my internship at the Unitarian Church of Atlanta. Spending a week with Anthony allowed me to get a fresh perspective on our congregation, on our city and on our country. On all three counts Anthony's visit left me thankful and proud to be here in Halifax as your minister.

While Anthony was here our congregation managed to host 95 people for our Thanksgiving dinner, shattering all previous attendance records, and doing it we grace and very little evident panic. We are a vital strong loving and resourceful community. As I related my role in pastoral care to Anthony, he remarked that he envied my position here. As the minister of a church of over 800 members, Anthony is unable to spend much time in a pastoral role... the demands of the organization suck up all the available time. Here, in Halifax, I am able to establish personal relationships with individuals

and families who are dealing with life in all its complexity and all of its heart-breaking-bitter-sweetness. I feel blessed to be able to do so.

I was proud to show Anthony our city of Halifax. The city is re-inventing itself and that means change and change can be stressful, but it is also vital and energizing. I took him to "Halifax's living room" at the Central Library and I introduced Anthony to Inglis Street, what I call our Sesame Street... with our Saturday Brunch, Hana and Halim at the Flower shop, Peshka and Bhorda at Sam's Pizza, Laba at the Sub shop, Schooner Books, the Resolute Club and so on. Regrettably the ice was not ready at the Halifax Curling Rink. We are situated in a rich and diverse neighbourhood in a rich and diverse city that is pulsing with vitality.

And I did not need to speak for Anthony to sense how proud I am of the vision that Canadians share of a country of cultural diversity and social progress. The contrast with the divisions evident today across the border did not need to be spoken of. The work that is being done across this country and in our congregation on forging a new relationship with our indigenous peoples is just one example of a people that is trying to live into its highest aspirations. I was able to tell Anthony with pride, about the "Cultural Circle" held with Debbie Eisan of the Mi'kmaq Friendship Center, attended by thirty members and friends of the congregation the week before he arrived. While we are a long way from perfection, we have much to be proud of as a country. I hope you are as proud of our congregation, our city and our country as I am. We have a great future with your support.

The most important pledge that I can make to you is to be the best minister that I can be and that means being present, serving, innovating and most importantly listening...

With Love... Norm

Board Buzz

The Board's primary topics on the agenda at the October 21st meeting were a report from treasurer Marilyn Shinyei regarding the 2018 budget, and plans for the 2018 canvass. Marilyn noted that we had more than reached our goal in 2017 in terms of pledges. The goal had been \$117,000 and pledges came in at \$121,000. Unfortunately due to deaths and illnesses, we will be about \$4,000 short in actual receipts from the pledges. The collection plate and fundraising contributions were also a little lower than budgeted. This would create a small deficit for the next year. The Board approved the 2018 budget with a deficit of about \$5,000. If pledges for 2018 were to be raised by 5 to 6% on average, this deficit would be reduced to zero. Board members were canvassed, and were urged to increase their pledges by 5 to 6%. Marilyn noted that last year we had a small surplus compared to the budget and if necessary this surplus could be called on to balance the budget. Some details on the budget are to be discussed in the Semi-Annual General Meeting on October 29th.

The canvass committee (Marilyn, Glenda Butt and Darla Muzzerall) had recommended that the 2018 canvass be an every-person canvass, with a theme of "A Fine Balance". About 10 volunteers will canvass approximately 10 pledge units each. The canvass will start with Commitment Sunday on November 5th and will be finished by the end of November. The Board accepted these recommendations.

Molly Hurd told the Board that she will be away from January to June next year, partly on a book launch, and that we needed to find a temporary replacement for her to run the Parents and Tots program on Thursday mornings. The Board agreed that Molly will take the lead in finding one or two individuals to run the program in her absence.

The Saturday morning brunch program was discussed. The program is growing and now attracts up to 40 people, mostly from the neighbourhood. Some people who learned about

the church through this program have begun to attend Sunday services. It was agreed that plate collections on two Sundays each month will be used to support the program. Other ways to raise funds for the brunch were also discussed. Collection plate contributions from the other two Sundays will be given to different charities. Various groups such as the Young Adults will be invited to suggest which charities should be supported this way.

Kitchen renovation will start towards the end of November. Some details on this work were given by Molly in the October newsletter.

As many members would know, the governing body of the Church used to be called the Vestry until a few years ago. After considerable discussion in the Vestry and later the congregation, it was agreed to rename the Vestry as the Board. Somewhat for similar reasons the Board has been discussing the topic of the name of the Church itself. This was brought up in the 2016 annual retreat where many suggested that a more inclusive word might be considered in place of 'Church'. A change, if it were to take place, would require a good deal of thought and discussion over an extended period, perhaps lasting a couple of years. Rev. Norm will give a sermon in November on this subject since the theme for November is 'Identity'. A salon is planned for spring 2018 to solicit members' and friends' views on their feelings about our identity as reflected in the word 'Church' and whether there is an argument to be made to change it. It would be good for members and friends to think about this in the meantime and discuss it with each other.



Shripad Pendse
Member,
UUCH Board

The Caring Column



Louise Malloch started a second-line treatment (a combo of chemo and immunotherapy) a few weeks ago. She had hoped to participate in a clinical trial, but her physical condition was not good enough to qualify for the trial. This is disappointing, especially since the trial seemed more likely to help, and she liked the idea of contributing to science. Louise's mother Susan White recently arrived for a two-month visit and looks forward to coming to church, maybe with Louise along as well!

Marie Davis had her 90th birthday on October 12th but unfortunately she had a fall the same day and was hospitalized for several days. Aside from bruises she is OK and back at home with extra Home Care help. We wish you good health for the rest of your Birthday Year, Marie.

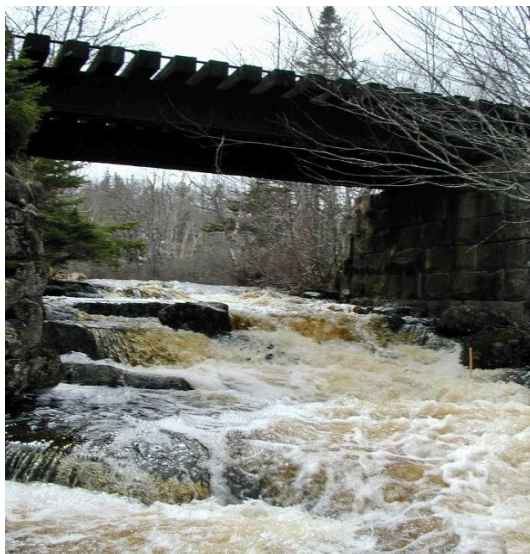
On October 30th a Celebration-of- Life service was held at the church for **Hugh Patrick Reynolds**, 47-year-old son of Elinor Egar-Reynolds. Hugh died peacefully on September 28th following an injury. We send our condolences to Elinor and her family.

The Caring Committee seeks to **increase the pool of friends who help with transportation** to and from the church and occasionally take congregants to appointments. If you could help us we would really appreciate it. Please contact me at 902-823-1176 or meo@eastlink.ca.

Mary Ellen Onno, Chair

Hike along the East River Saturday, November 18

The November hike will be along the Rails to Trails section that begins in East River, one of the most scenic routes along this trail. The trail follows the East River with its still waters, lakes and rapids.



Allyn Clarke photo

Meet at the church at 12 noon or at the carpool lot at the corner of the St Margaret's Bay Road and the Prospect Road. Otherwise we will meet in the carpool lot at exit 7 of highway 103 at 12:50. Once again, call me at 902-483-4731 if you are lost or running late.

Allyn Clarke



The deadline for submissions for the December newsletter is **10 am, Monday, November 27th.**

Please submit to both
braeside@eastlink.ca
and
uuchurch@eastlink.ca

Jesse's Volunteer Column

The RE Committee is seeking volunteers to plan and lead Religious Exploration activities for children during Sunday Services.

RE Committee Activities:

1. Plan & present religious exploration programming for children & teens
2. Organize group expeditions (camping, hiking, learning, volunteering, etc.) that reinforce lessons from the UU Religious Exploration curriculum
3. Plant & maintain the church's raised vegetable beds

We are seeking volunteers to:

- Plan & lead RE activities during Sunday Services, so the youngest members of our church community have opportunities to learn and be engaged
 - Our goal is to have a different member of the church lead each week's activity, so members can all take turns alternating RE participation with attendance at Sunday Services
- Suggest and plan RE expeditions

Details:

- Time commitment: 2 hours per month (i.e. plan & lead one activity per month during a Sunday Service)
- Criminal record check required if you will be alone with the kids

Contact: Tanya Bilsbury

- tanya.bilsbury@gmail.com
- 902-414-4451





Saturday November 18th, 10 - 2

No admission charge

Lunch - \$5

Coffee and sweets only - \$3

Door Prize draw - \$1

**Any left over food, books, giftables, etc.
will be available on Sunday, Nov 19th**

Starting on Sunday, November 5th and 12th

please bring in any of the following that you can contribute to this fundraiser:

“Re-giftable” items with values of \$5 to \$20—those gifts you've received or items you've bought that are still in the box, or never or barely used. Décor, home or kitchen items. Luxe or glam pieces such as ladies or gents' accessories (no clothes). Well-crafted items, hand-knitted items. Artsy things. Useful things. Nifty-gifty things.

Bake table goodies: Anything goes. Bread, squares, cookies, muffins, pies. We need enough for the sale table, and to sell with lunch. Start your ovens!

Jams, jellies, preserves: Didn't get around to making any this fall? Fortunately, there's still lots of time to make a couple of batches before the bazaar.

Gift basket (door prize) items: Small, nonperishable.

Special teas, jams, jellies, preserves, treats, chocolates, nuts. Packaged, bottled or canned savoury gourmet items (spreads, paté, etc.). Also, small holiday trinkets or novelties.

Books published in the last 10 years, like new: Two categories **ONLY** to keep things simple: **fiction** and **non-fiction**. Hardcover or trade (large) paperback.

CDS and DVDS - we have a large collection, feel free to bring us more.

Come to the Bazaar – bring your friends and neighbours!

The Bazaar Committee: Janet Horofker, Elinor Eggar-Reynolds, Faith Piccolo

Religious Exploration

First and foremost, I would like to thank outgoing RE committee member Allyn Clarke for his overwhelming support of RE. During his time on the RE committee, Allyn would volunteer as a teacher for 3-week long stints and crafted beautiful wooden birdhouses for us to paint.

I am pleased to welcome incoming member Jesse Robson, with all her energy and ideas. Jesse led our Thanksgiving session on gratitude, where we thought of the overflowing cornucopias of wonderful things in our lives.

In response to a request from a parent, this fall I am focussed on teaching the children the Seven Principles. The formula is that after we go upstairs, we discuss the story read during *A Time for All Ages* during circle time. I ask prompting questions to tie the moral of the story to one of our principles. Then, the children do a drawing activity based on the principle posters provided through the UUA's *Love Surrounds Us* curriculum. I have been quite touched by the wisdom and maturity of some of the children's contributions.



Louisa and Sabine showing their Seven Principles art

This task has been somewhat challenging because sequential, curriculum-based activities don't work well for RE given sporadic attendance patterns. However, I'm quite determined to get through it

given the foundational nature of the principles, and eventually bring all students into the loop.

In keeping with a community faith formation approach to religious education, children now light the chalice with the congregation and proceed directly to their activities (rather than during their circle time). This lets the children engage in the service while saving time and reducing distractions and safety concerns upstairs.

Facing a shortage of RE teachers, I hope that parents will consider volunteering at least once during the year, to a maximum of once per month. I also invite all members of the congregation to consider how you might share an activity with the children (they are good fun).



Jesse working with the children

I am pleased to have enrolled in the UUA's Religious Education Credentialing Program, as the first Canadian candidate. I am enjoying working with my new mentor, Lynn Sabourin, Director of Lifespan Learning for the North Shore Unitarians in Vancouver, BC.

Thank you for your support!

**Tanya Bilbury, Director
Religious Exploration**



Music Montage



*"Dear Music: Thanks for always clearing my head,
healing my heart, and lifting my spirits."*

~ Lori Deschene

November's 'Singing As We Gather'

The Gathering Hymn for November is #193 *Our Faith Is but a Single Gem*. November's theme is *Story/Identity*. This hymn sends the message that through our tapestry of backgrounds and paths, we seek a united truth.

*From many lips, in every age, the truth eternal is proclaimed
By Western saint, and Eastern sage, and all the good, however named.
Beside the noblest of our race our lives as yet cannot compare:
May we at length their truth embrace and in their sacred mission share.*

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. No need to commit to more than one month at a time or to every Sunday, and there is no need to read music. Contact me if you would like to participate at any time.

The November Music Project will be on Sunday, November 19th.

The next rehearsal opportunities for this are:

Sunday, November 12th at 9:30 am

Sunday, November 19th at 9:30 am

(I will be away on Sunday, November 5th.)

December's Music Project Sunday is yet to be determined.

Music Director Vacation

I will be on vacation from October 31st to November 6th inclusive.

Deborah Wiggins
Music Director

Thanksgiving Dinner Potluck, 2017!

This year Shripad Pendse and I took on the organizing of this annual event using Marilyn Shinyei's lists and recommendations from the previous year. She had noted that the attendance had been 61 people; we expected about the same number and planned accordingly.

About a week before the event, when we had only 30 names, a UU church friend from Bedford asked if she could bring a newly arrived refugee family of five, originally from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. And then the mushrooming began! That group of six grew to 10. Another anticipated group of three grew to five; people brought weekend houseguests, old friends and new, and some of our neighbours came by.

And everyone brought food! Meat from four turkeys, mounds of potatoes, gravy and multiple vegetables and salads—and the wine flowed freely. And then there was dessert! At least 10 pies, plus squares, crisps, fruit, ice cream and cakes.



Paul Galbraith photo

People were seated everywhere, and apparently even eating in shifts. The weather was lovely, so some were outside on the deck. At some point, in tones of awe, Rev. Norm announced that he counted 95 people—and every one was having a great time!

There were so many people showing up to help both before and afterwards that there weren't enough jobs for them all. Two astounding Chinese

women washed the mountain of plates and innumerable glasses and mugs, and Barb Taylor did an amazing job operating the dishwasher for what must have seemed like hours. We also have to give special thanks to Faith and John Piccolo who held the whole kitchen process together from beginning to end.

It was a remarkable afternoon of people coming together in friendship, to share their bounty, and to be thankful for their lives and the day. Shripad and I want to thank everyone who was a part of it, and to express our own gratitude for the opportunity to help it happen.

Still in awe,
Margaret Galbraith



Who was this woman?

Who was Sophia Lyon Fahs, for whom one of our second-floor rooms at UUCH is named?

Most long-time members will know this, but for the latecomers among us, we invite you to read about his bold, visionary woman of Unitarian fame. Reprinted with permission.

A Pioneer in Religious Education, a Revitalized Legacy

By The Rev. Dr. Barry Andrews, Minister Emeritus, Unitarian
Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock, Long Island, NY.



Sophia Fahs (1876-1978) was a progressive religious educator who believed deeply in engaging children where they lived, in the world of their daily lives, in the process of equipping them to deal with everyday problems. She also sought to stimulate their sense of wonder and curiosity about life. Her approach to religious education, as described in her book *Today's Children and Yesterday's Heritage*, marked a radical departure from traditional content and methods. Instead of telling children what they ought to believe, Fahs encouraged them to ponder for themselves the mysteries of the universe and human destiny. "One's faith," Fahs wrote, "is the philosophy of life that gathers up into one emotional whole...all the specific beliefs one holds about many kinds of things in many areas of life."

Fahs pioneered in exposing children to the stories, myths and legends of other cultures, and to the discoveries of science. In place of rigid lesson plans and structured learning, she introduced painting, role-playing and creative self-expression. In place of beliefs that are divisive, discriminatory and damaging, she promoted beliefs that are expansive, inclusive and gateways to wider understanding. She insisted that there is no special religious knowledge. "Instead of helping children...to think about 'religious things,' we need to learn how to help children think about ordinary things until insights and feelings are found which have a religious quality."

Fahs not only used progressive teaching methods; she also understood that the process of achieving religion never ceases. Faith, too, is progressive. "As the personality grows and changes so do beliefs grow and change." Thus it was important, from Fahs' perspective, to offer children alternative points of view and to stimulate them to be both self-reliant and sensitive to the needs of others. It is more important to encourage self-reflection, critical thinking and the development of one's inner resources than to reinforce rigid beliefs. Only in this way will our children learn to promote global peace and human solidarity.

Fahs' ideas were developed in the context of the experimental Sunday School at Columbia University's Teachers College, the Union School of Religion and the Riverside Church School, each of them laboratories of religious education theory and methods.

In her sixties she was hired by the American Unitarian Association to edit the *New Beacon Curriculum*. In keeping with her prior experience, she insisted that teaching and learning should be collaborative in nature, that subject matter should be consistent with the children's cognitive development, and that curriculum should be field-tested to ensure that it engages the children's interest.

Sophia Fahs' contribution to Unitarian Universalist religious education has been transformative. Almost single-handedly, she shifted religious education from Bible-centered to experience-centered learning and from adult-driven to child-driven pedagogy. She was on the leading edge of developments in the field of religious education theory and practice. No doubt, were she writing and teaching today, she would still be looking for new ways of implementing her philosophy of creative religious development.

Remembrance Day



November 11th

