



Our Services

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

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Rev. Ben Robins
minister@uuch.ca

Andrea Dewar
Office Administrator
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902-429-5500
Wed-Thur-Fri
1-6 pm

Joe Britto
Board President

Etta Hamm
Newsletter Editor

Sunday services
start at 10:30 am

All are welcome



Join us in exploring what it means to live our deepest values out loud. We extend a special welcome to visitors and newcomers, and hope you will come again.

For the [Zoom](#) link to all services, use ID 666 004 431, password 010670.

**Please note our extra services this month:
Saturday Dec 21, and Tuesday Dec 24**

Dec 1 — Songs of Hope

With a musical service featuring the Pick-Up Choir and the Afterchoir, we enter into what for some of us is a season of hope – for ourselves and our loved ones, for the region and our country, for the world. *James Morris and Ben Robins with the Pick-Up Choir and the Afterchoir*

Dec 8 — “That Changed Us”

Humans have enormous capacity for creativity and growth, but we can also be creatures of habit and conditioning. Whether the change we crave is within ourselves, our circles, or the larger world, how we meet the moment can make all the difference. Today we explore practices that open the mind and heart to something new. *Joe Britto and Ben Robins*

Dec 15 — Blue Christmas

For some, the joy of the season can only be felt if there is also room for grief. In this musical service we make room for both, and also honour those who find only grief at this time. There will be a pastoral circle after the service for those who need extra care. *James Morris and Ben Robins*



Dec 21 — (Saturday, 7 pm) Winter Solstice Service

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. *Katherine Hutka and family*

Dec 22 — Readings and Carols

A quiet moment for reflection in the midst of the holiday rush, with readings and carols around our Christmas tree. *Pam Griffin-Hody assisted by Mary Lu MacDonald*

Services continued, next page ...

December 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10:30 am Service See inside for all Sunday-after-service programs	2 	3	4 12:00 Lunch Bunch	5	6	7 10-11:30 am Brunch 
8 10:30 am Service 12-2:00 End-of-Life Discussion	9	10 7 pm Worship meeting	11 12:00 Lunch Bunch 6:30 pm Board meeting	12	13	14 10-11:30 am Brunch
15 10:30 am Service 12:00 Humanist Discussion	16	17	18	19	20	21 10 – 11:30 am Brunch 7 pm Winter Solstice service
22 10:30 am Service	23	24 3 pm Candlelight Service 	25 Christmas Day  Hannukah today to Jan 2	26 Boxing Day 	27	28 Brunch resumes next month
29 10:30 am Service	30	31				

Services continued ...

Dec 24 — (Tuesday, 3 pm) Christmas Eve Candlelight Service *

Like many traditions at this time of year, Christmas bears witness to the birth of something new. Gather in hope, gather in gladness, gather by candlelight: A child is born. *Ben Robins assisted by Mary Lu MacDonald*

Dec 29 — Another Freedom Christmas

Irene will tell a story of a Christmas past that brings out the spirit of the season. *Irene Baros-Johnson with Margaret Galbraith*



* Our Christmas Eve offering will go to the Minister's Discretionary Fund, which helps people get through times of extra need.



Minister's note

The Science of Advent

In an ideal world, I experience this season as a time of hopeful waiting, trusting that there is goodness just around the corner. A season of calm, because there is nothing that needs to be done now; a season of joy, because life is good, a season of beautiful lights and cozy blankets; a season of being together, because simply being together is one of the best things in life.

But this is not an ideal world, and so it's not so easy to put down the burdens of the world and simply be, with hope and trust. Political battles don't go on pause; work deadlines still exist; each of our metaphorical gardens continues to need tending; and many of us have cultures in which this special time of year means extra effort, not extra rest.

I've been thinking of a cross-country running coach I had. When he was a teenager, his coach would have him do workouts with 20 repetitions of 400 meters, which is 8 km of running at high speed. Exhausting! He didn't have us do that though; he studied the biochemistry of athletic performance and concluded that a briefer workout was more effective, perhaps 8 repetitions rather than 20. As runners, our bodies got the cellular transformation without the exhaustion. Doing 20 reps might have given him enormous reserves of grit, but it didn't make him more effective at the task at hand.

An outside observer, comparing the two methods, might not have appreciated the more restful method. Fortunately, his results spoke for themselves: We excelled, (I personally was not a star runner, but he took me beyond expectations).

Religious traditions that have periods of rest are apt to make them mandatory – God says you need to stop. Otherwise there is always an excuse to do just one more thing – go to one more civic action, or help out one more neighbour, or attend one more party. All worthy things, each valuable in itself, but creating a life where you are doing 20 reps and never allowing yourself time for recovery? How to say no to doing one more thing? Make rest mandatory.

We don't pass the buck to a higher power, and so we have to decide for ourselves: Are the urgencies of today really so important that they preclude the rest and recovery that are needed to meet the urgencies of tomorrow?

Whether it's urgency regarding women's health, or climate, or AI, or housing supply, or international relations, or sustaining democratic norms, some of us might decide that today is no time to rest. Fair enough. If that is you, I hope that you pencil in some rest soon. And perhaps find ways to do your work in 8 bursts of energy rather than 20.

The science of advent is not as developed as the science of athletic performance. However we each decide to spend this time of year, let's do it mindfully, and let's talk about how it's going.

Love,
Ben

Sunday Programs



Dec 1, 12:00

Baking: Ben and his wife Tanya will lead a baking session, the results of which will be donated to those in need. All welcome, with a special invitation to families with children and youth. Tanya is experienced at running kitchens, including programming for children and youth.

Dec 1, 2:00 - 4:00

Games: Bring your favourite board games, role playing games or theatre games.

Dec 1, 4:00 - 5:00

Writing Group: Any kind of writing is welcome, for example haiku, poetry, free writing, writing from prompts, fiction of various styles, journaling. We will write for most of time, with optional sharing.

Dec 1, 5:00

Simplicity: A no-frills evening service about how beautiful December can be if you find moments of simplicity – in which we will find room to just breathe.

Dec 8, 12:00 - 2:00

End of Life Issues: See Marilyn's notice on this important six-session program on a further page.

Note: The Christmas party Pam announced last month for this date is cancelled due to enough going on already!

Dec 15, 12:00

Humanist Discussion: RIGHTS. How do we work out the problem when my rights conflict with your rights, and one group's conflict with another's? What is a right anyway? Is it absolute?

Dec 22, 11:45

No-prep Book Club: Bring a book you're reading, a book you love, or pull one off our library shelves. You'll have the option to share about your book, or just listen to others and join the discussion. You might discover a book you'd like to curl up with on the couch.

Food box crying out for food



We and our neighbours deeply appreciate your monetary donations that enable us to continue the Saturday morning brunch. The brunch makes a difference in people's lives and puts our UU beliefs into action. May this practise long continue.

We also have a food box in our building's front porch – that has been practically empty since Sunday attendance fell off some time ago.

It may be easier for some, (rather than making electronic donations or writing cheques), to put non-perishable foods in the box on Sundays (or week days); the outer door is never locked. What a welcome sight for our neighbours to find something there to stave off their hunger.

Suggested items:

Applesauce
Canned beans
Canned chicken
Canned tuna, salmon, sardines & more
Canned meat: ham, spam
Canned or pkg'd soup, stew, etc.
Canned evaporated milk
Cereal
Cooking oil, salt, soya sauce
Energy bars, crackers, cookies
Fruit, canned or dried
Instant coffee, tea bags, sugar
Instant mashed potatoes
Kraft dinner, ramen noodles
Mustard, yellow
Pasta: Macaroni, spaghetti
Rice
Spaghetti sauce
Miracle whip type dressing
Peanut butter, jam, marmalade, honey
Yogourt, cup size (a favourite)

Plus: Razors, toothpaste, toothbrushes, hand soap, warm socks, gloves and other small, useful things.

End-of-Life Issues

Session Two – Dec 8, 12 noon

Having difficult conversations; making difficult decisions

- Death over Dinner
- Substitute Decision Maker
 - Decision Points: The end-of-life conveyer belt

Preparing survivors for what lies ahead

- Dealing with grief, finding grief support groups
- Creating support circles for dependents with special needs



Future sessions: Jan 12 & 26, Feb 9 & 23

There will be more humour, guest speakers, videos and great conversation.

Feel free to come and go as you are able or as the topics appeal to you. We have about 28 people signed up for the series. Twenty-two were present for our first session on Nov 24th.

Marilyn Shinyei



Church Directory Updates

New address, cell:

BUTLER, Stephen* 902-477-1541
705-2641 Northwood Terrace 782-414-2222
Halifax, NS B3K 3S6
butlerstephen205@gmail.com

Correction:

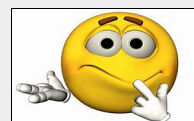
PENDSE, Shripad* shripen@yahoo.ca
(not .com)

New friend:

RICHARDSON, Geoff
42 Halef Court, Halifax, NS B3N 0C1
grichards99@hotmail.com

Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for submissions for the January newsletter was difficult to establish at the time of publication.



Stay tuned.

Looking for a Past Newsletter?

Past UUCH newsletters as far back as 2014 are archived on our web site at uuch.ca.

On the home page, click on the 3-bar menu (upper right), then Upcoming Events, then Newsletters—and voila, there they are, and printable too.

Hope this helps you on a fact finding mission, or for a nostalgic look back to our community's past.

From the Caring Committee

Many thanks to **Sylvia Mattinson** for her years of service as chair of the Caring Committee. Sylvia, you have a big heart, a generous spirit, and kept us organized and in touch. Thank you. And thank you for continuing on the committee. For now, Ben is ensuring that the duties of the chair get done.



Sylvia, visiting Marie Davis at Northwood, September 2022

Barbara Harsanyi has been confined to her room at Northwood for more than two weeks due to an outbreak on her floor. She would welcome phone calls and cards, and is eager to get back to the UUCH once again to share time with others at the service, Sunday mornings.

Our mandate is to offer help to individuals in our UU community in circumstances where our support might be helpful. We welcome being informed of such situations. Activities include drives to medical or other appointments, visits in hospital or at home, grocery shopping and other needs that arise.

We also arrange for the receptions following celebration of life services at UUCH. Along with our own efforts we very much appreciate the help and support those in our community give to other UUCH members and friends.

Are you a potential caring helper? Would you like to know when there is a congregant in need of a visit, or help during an illness, or a ride to an appointment? Tell us your interest by email to Ben at minister@uuch.ca. If you could occasionally meet a need, it would be a big help.

From the Caring Committee
(Faith, Judy, Shripad, Sylvia and Ben)

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.



CUC Online Events



The following two items are gleaned from the CUC's weekly recap of their events happening until January 22. Information about these and other upcoming online events can be found on the Events calendar on the CUC's web site at cuc.ca.

Success Stories: Dec 7, 2 pm AT

To close the calendar year, let's celebrate our successes, large and small. We will highlight a few stories and invite you to share yours.

Connect and Deepen: Dec 21, 5 pm AT

Connect & Deepen is an online community for adults interested in meaningful reflection, conversation, and shared ideas for living our values. This is a welcoming space that encourages spiritual as well as philosophical exploration, with an eye to putting these explorations into action.

The CUC office will be closed from noon ET on December 20 through January 1, 2025, reopening January 2. We wish everyone a safe and restful holiday season.

From the Climate Crisis Team

Free transit = fewer emissions?

Yarmouth received their long-awaited new buses in September, making the service reliable once again, without frequent mechanical cancellations. In addition, the Town Council has now voted to begin **free** transit rides, beginning on 9 December.

An extended route will also add more stops, including, for the first time, one in the Wasoqopa'q First Nation (WFN) Reserve. This will undoubtedly increase ridership and reduce carbon emissions when car drivers opt for the free ride.



Pictured are Yarmouth Mayor Pam Mood, Councillors Belle Hatfield and Derek Lesser, Deputy Mayor Steve Berry and Councillor, Wade Cleveland.

Affordable US renewable energy

Despite concerns about US President-Elect Donald Trump's impact on the clean energy transition, economic and state-level policies make it unlikely that his return will reverse America's progress. Market forces – especially in Republican states – are driving the shift.

"Texas has the most solar and wind of any state, not because Republicans in Texas love renewables, but because it's the cheapest form of electricity there." Grist. From "Fix the News". Check out this weekly listing of global good news [here](#)

Christmas Bird Count

Climate change is affecting bird populations all across our country, making the annual Christmas Bird Count (between now and the 25th) an important indicator of present numbers. A 2019 study predicted that two-thirds of North America's birds will be seriously affected by our changing climate.

Experts need the help of Citizen Scientists (us) to update the bird populations and there are 40 locations in Nova Scotia involved this year. Check [here](#) to find out when one will be held nearest to you.

More Citizen Science opportunities are available across Canada for various wild-life observers: see the list [here](#) Your sightings can add to the overall knowledge of what climate scientists are monitoring.

Leslie Robinson

Yarmouth

Climate Crisis Team member



Common Redpoll. May Haga

Reconciliation and Dismantling Racism (RDR) Committee

Neptune Theatre offerings: Neptune has two plays in the new year that you may wish to consider for yourself or as gifts. These are edited descriptions from their website:

Controlled Damage, running from January 14 to February 2nd, is the story of Nova Scotia's Civil Rights icon Viola Desmond. It explores her life and how her act of bravery in a Nova Scotia movie theatre in 1946 started a ripple effect that is still felt today. An ordinary woman forced to be extraordinary by an unyielding and racist world, Desmond never gave up — despite the personal cost to her and those who loved her.

Andrea Scott's highly theatrical examination of Desmond and her legacy traces the impact she has had on our culture, but also casts light on the slow progress of the fight for social justice and civil rights in Canada. It first showed in Halifax in 2020. Get your tickets [here](#).



Josephine, February 13 to 16, is a biographical musical that combines cabaret, theatre and dance to tell the story of the iconic Josephine Baker, who was the first African-American international superstar and one of the most remarkable figures of the 20th century. In this multi-award-winning biographical cabaret that combines music, theatre, burlesque, and dance, we follow Baker's incredible exploits that were groundbreaking for her time and still incredible nearly a century later. She became a star after moving to Europe in 1924. She starred alongside white romantic leading men in films in the 30's, had multiple interracial marriages and homosexual relationships, and performed in men's clothing before the term "drag" was commonly used/known.

She was a spy for the French Resistance in WWII, a civil rights activist, and mother to 12 adopted children. Her success often gave her the opportunity to live free from the racial oppression of her home nation, though she never stopped yearning for acceptance in America. Get your tickets [here](#).

We wish everyone a warm Christmas season with family and friends.

Brian Gifford
for the RDR Committee



From the CUC

Giving is good for us.

That's the conclusion of a variety of studies which found charitable giving can lead to longer, healthier, more

fulfilling lives. The evidence from these studies is important information. But for many of us, it's just confirming what we already knew.

Canadians love to give, contributing \$11.8 billion in 2022. At the same time, one in five Canadians are reporting that they plan to access charitable services to meet their essential needs. Thus giving not only feels good, it's more necessary now than ever.

Enter GivingTuesday, the world's largest generosity movement. GivingTuesday was founded in 2013 in Canada by CanadaHelps.org, GIV3, and other founding partners. GivingTuesday has active movements in more than 80 countries, working year-round to inspire generosity around the world, with a common mission to create a world where giving is part of everyday life.

For Canadian Unitarians and Universalists of course, giving is already a part of everyday life. By contributing your time, talents, and treasure to both your home congregations and the CUC, you've helped us fulfill our mission to enhance, nurture and promote the Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist religion in Canada. Your donations of almost \$40,000 in 2023 were invaluable to our work. Here's just some of what we've accomplished over the past year.

- We launched UU Expressions, a groundbreaking 10-episode docu-series that discovers, celebrates, and challenges Unitarian Universalism as practiced in Canada today.
- We helped five congregations with their ministerial transitions, assisting in three cases with the numerous steps necessary to settle ministers from the US.

- We continued Congregational Conversations, bringing together our members from coast to coast with the knowledge that we are stronger when we collaborate.
- We submitted 24 refugee applications and are awaiting the arrival of more than 50 refugees from earlier applications.
- We continue to host Gathered Here and Connect and Deepen, offering a vital lifeline for our young adults and members without a home congregation, and Rising Together for UUs of Colour.

But here's the thing: we couldn't have done any of this without you. And to continue this critical work, we need your support.

Giving Tuesday is on **Tuesday, December 3** this year, and it's a great opportunity to recognize and reflect on the role of the CUC, which includes all of us as Canadian Unitarians, in your life.

You can help us make an even bigger impact by becoming a monthly donor.

- For as little as \$8 a month – \$1 for each of our Principles – you can help four youth attend our in-person youth conference, CanUdle 2025 in Montreal, for free.
- When you give \$18 a month, you are part of dismantling barriers to full inclusion so that our congregations and communities are welcoming and inclusive
- And, your gift of \$80 each month helps bring refugees to Canada to start new lives.

Thank you for all you do to help us grow vital, sustainable UU communities, on **Giving Tuesday, December 3**, and throughout the year.

Click here to [Give now!](#)



