
February 2011 fevrier



Events this Month

All Sunday services start at 10:00 am unless otherwise specified.
We have an active children's program during our Sunday service, at which all children are warmly welcome

February 4

A CUC-sponsored Mid-winter Retreat - UUs from the Greater Toronto Area plus friends from all over are invited to a weekend of pleasant reflection on a variety of topics, at a retreat centre outside Toronto, from Feb 4 - 6. See CUC website for details.

February 6

Dr. Harvey White

“God Is Not ...”

"God" suffers a lot of doubt and criticism, especially, but not only, by Unitarian Universalists. Attempts to describe what one means by 'God', or the existence and nature of something called 'God', are fraught with argument and contradiction. Can some of the venerables of theological thought help us out?

Harvey White, professor of religion at Bishop's University, returns to our pulpit to reflect on so-called negative theology's contribution to the discussion.

Service Leader: Keith Baxter
Musician: Laurent Hubert
Coffee Convenor: Mary-Ann McCarron
Flower Convenor: Ann Rothfels

February 13

M. Laurent Hubert

“L'amour, moteur d'évolution”

Laurent a écrit: Le thème qui m'inspire c'est l'amour, d'abord entre conjoints, puis avec les autres, comme mécanisme naturel pour aller plus loin que soi, se dépasser et finalement faire évoluer son être intérieur (son âme?).

NB: ce service bilingue va privilégier le français, surtout pour l'homélie.

Please note: While parts of this service will be bilingual English-French, the bulk of this service will be delivered, exceptionally, in French. We especially invite all our francophone friends to this service.

Service Leader: Katherine Pérusse
Musician: France Thibault
Coffee Convenor: Howard Hale
Flower Convenor: Ann Rothfels

February 20

Sooky Dunton & Rev. Carole Martignacco

“Our Moral Landscape”

Episode 2 in this three-part mini-series of discussions of the ideas of Mr. Sam Harris, as described in his book of the same title. A short presentation followed by active round-table discussion by all those present. Join us. (Part one took place on January 23rd.)

Carole begins a 4-week period of light duties known as her study month, after today's service.

Service Leader: Carole Martignacco
Musician: Pat Bird
Coffee Convenor: Hélène Cunningham
Flower Convenor: Ann Rothfels

February 27

Ms. Kirstin McKeown

“Inspiring Samaritans”

A man falls on a moving escalator and no one moves to help. Where are the Good Samaritans? What do people need to know, to understand or to believe in order to be enabled to step forward and become Good

Samaritans? What is missing, and what can we do, not only to become Good Samaritans ourselves, but to help others to make that same step forward?

Kirstin McKeown is Worship Chair at the Montreal Unitarian Church. This is her first visit to North Hatley

Service Leader: Keith Baxter

Musician: Jaime Dunton

Coffee Convenor: Ann Rothfels

Flower Convenor: Ann Rothfels

March 6

Mr. Keith Baxter

“ The Restoration of Religion”

Religion wants to be a force for Good in the World. And it succeeds sometimes, but fails a lot, too. What is needed to restore Religion to its real purpose in life?

Service Leader: Keith Baxter

Musician:

Coffee Convenor: Hélène Cunningham

Flower Convenor: Ann Rothfels

Religious and Spiritual Exploration - Children's Program for February

February 4th- The Symbols of the Worlds Teachings

February 6th- Valentine Making

February 13th- L'amour

February 20th- Learning Together - Sam will be our children's program leader

February 27th- SKATING in North Hatley. Children will leave at 10:00 by foot and will return for coffee hour for hot chocolate and snacks.

Important and Exciting

March 13th- The Spirit of Play

I will be leading our first intergenerational games service.

Please bring your favorite game and a potluck snack to share.

I will be asking the children to assist with opening words and chalice lighting.

Please confirm attendance as the date approaches.

If you have any questions, concerns or ideas please feel free to contact me, Jane-Lindsay:

(819) 993-3785 or re@uustrie.ca

More Thoughts on the UN

David Cameron, a student in Political Studies who spoke to UUEstrie on UN Sunday in October, mentioned then that he thought perhaps 1/3 of Canadian young adults still saw the UN in the same way he does—as important and relevant for world affairs and world peace. But what about the other 2/3?

When asked about this later David thought there were two causes increasing the proportion of young adults who are indifferent towards the United Nations.

First is the classic problem of political apathy: young Canadians are becoming less and less worldly by choice. They put little effort into familiarizing themselves with the affairs of their state or their politicians, and this extends to a lack of active concern for the U.N.

Second, he blamed the declining effectiveness of the U.N. The peacekeeping instruments which the United Nations is most famous for applying since 1945 seem to have become outdated, if not outright powerless. The nature of conflict in the world is changing, and the 1990's did very little to uphold the UN's image as an adequate protector against violence, conflict and strife.

David went on to say that some believe the United Nations is only an effective tool when the 5 permanent Security Council members deem it convenient, because each of them has a veto in the Security Council. Further, on numerous occasions, United Nations demands for peace have been dismissed by the USA, due to its own grossly mistaken self-interest. All of which to say the honour of the U.N. is less respected now, compared to the years of peacekeeping's zenith, and many decisions of the UN seem now to be unenforceable.

Given these weaknesses, the apathy and indifference of 2/3 of Canadian young adults is sadly understandable.

KB, with thanks to David for agreeing to share his thoughts.

One's destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things
- Henry Miller

Out beyond ideas of wrong doing and right doing, there is a field. I'll meet you there.

Jellaluddin Rumi, The Essential Rumi

Is this Issue Even Present on the Radar ?

The issue I am referring to here is, firstly, the unparalleled situation in Quebec of the falling apart of a once all powerful Roman Catholic Church, a divorce between “la culture québécoise et le catholicisme institutionnel” according to an article published in the newspaper *LE DEVOIR*, May 3rd 2010, and the opportunity it provides for the Unitarian Universalist movement.

The last four decades have seen dwindling numbers of attendance at RC church services, as well as that of aging clergy and religious communities. What is a new predicament for the RC Church, is that while it could console itself that the same Quebecois(es) who had become “non practising” were still declaring themselves Catholics, this is no longer true of the younger generation. These children and grand children of baby-boomers do not seek a church or even civil wedding nor christening for their children. Is this a case of the baby thrown away with the bath water?

On one hand, there are now in Quebec, thousands if not millions of people who have discovered that they can think or judge by themselves: on the other hand, there may be as many living without the benefits of rituals or empowerment from congregational gatherings.

I wish to communicate to UU Fellowship a sense of urgency in reaching these lapsed Catholics, their children and grandchildren. There still is a slim window of opportunity to show the youth especially, that UU values of, respect, freedom of expression, inclusiveness, are a worthwhile alternative, before they become firmly secularized or indifferent to any religious practice.

I hope UU's will not let this opportunity slip by, which in my opinion leads to the second part of this issue:

Is the Canadian Unitarian Council aware of this situation? If so, what does the CUC intend to do about it? Will the CUC consider departing from the traditional ways of letting groups organize themselves first before offering support? Should the CUC adopt a more proactive approach?

Will the CUC see the need to discuss this issue at the national as well as regional and congregational levels?

- Hélène Hayes Cunningham

[N.B. The newspaper *LE DEVOIR*, May 3rd 2010, presented on its weekend edition's front page, a photo of a very upset Pope Benedict XVI and a title asking if this was the end of the Catholic Church in Quebec.

The main article also referred to a recent study by E.-Martin Meunier, Jean-François Laniel et Jean-Christophe Demers in *Modernité et religion au Québec*.]

Denominational affairs

If you are a member, you get the Canadian Unitarian newsletter. There is now a brand **new eNewsletter**, on-line readers can access it at <http://www.cuc.ca/enews/january2011/>

Unfortunately, there is not yet a link on the CUC main website to this, though likely the monthly issues will follow the same pattern, and the missing link will be provided eventually. (And you thought we had problems with *our* site.)

Past issues of Canadian U are still available at: <http://www.cuc.ca/newsletter/canu.htm>

Sensation of the Mystical

("found poetry")

The most beautiful and profound emotion
we can experience

is the sensation of the mystical.

It is the sower of all true science.

He to whom this emotion is a stranger,
who can no longer wonder and stand rapt
in awe,

is as good as dead.

To know that what is impenetrable to us
really exists,

manifesting itself as the highest wisdom

and the most radiant beauty,

which our dull faculties can comprehend

only in their primitive forms -

this knowledge, this feeling,
is at the center of true religion.

~ Albert Einstein ~

(The Merging of Spirit and Science, cited in
All Things Give God Glory, ed. by S. Rena)



Minister's Reflection - Carole's Column

"When you open yourself to the continually changing, impermanent, dynamic nature of your own being and of reality, you increase your capacity to love and care about other people and your capacity to not be afraid. You're able to keep

your eyes open, your heart open, and your mind open. And you notice when you get caught up in prejudice, bias, and aggression. You develop an enthusiasm for no longer watering those negative seeds, from now until the day you die. And, you begin to think of your life as offering endless opportunities to start to do things differently. " ~Pema Chödrön in 'Practicing Peace in Times of War'

If you could send a "valentine" to the world, what would it say? February being the month in popular culture set aside to celebrate love, with a heady focus on the romantic variety. Markets are everywhere flooded with roses and chocolate and heart-shaped whatever! Each time the wheel of the year spins, I think: here we go for another round of indulgence, followed for many with purging and fasting! Not exactly a spiritual exercise!

One way to heart-fully celebrate might be to stop in the midst of the cultural madness and examine our assumptions about love. For a religious community, love might be defined as a capacity to welcome and care about other people, an ability to open to life and, yes - one by one, fearlessly to confront and dismantle our own biases against including others. In this quote from the Buddhist spiritual teacher I hear a profound challenge to examine what "negative seeds" we may have been mindlessly watering. To expand our capacity to love, and widen our circle of inclusion. Prejudices, biases, and aggression – we all have them. Imagining we don't is a particularly pervasive and difficult bias to overcome!

This year Valentine's Day came early for me. As I write this in late January, I've just participated in a very successful "wedding salon" at the Hotel Delta in Sherbrooke, promoting UU Estrie's unique and meaningful "Ceremonies with Heart" in the delightful company of our newest Lay Chaplain, France Thibault. Standing at our display greeting

potential wedding couples, I was reminded how with every wedding I perform I celebrate my belief that a truly nurturing and enduring love is one of the most amazing gifts we can give each other. The mere attempt requires such generosity and fine-tuning of the spirit, it deserves celebration – with as much idealism, humour and realism we can muster. Yet in my life experience and in my role as minister, I know sometimes far too much of the myriad difficulties that can manifest daily between people in the many ways we are related. For those who covenant to partner each other through the thick and thin of a shared life, our culture poses huge challenges to stability, loyalty and deferred gratification. Therefore, I am convinced that romantic love needs all the help it can get these days. When I survey the cultural landscape, knowing what I know of love and its challenges as well as its joys, I'm not at all sure Valentine's Day is designed to promote love in its most profound and lasting forms.

So I admit to approaching this secular holiday with some discomfort. I am caught between my own love of roses and chocolate – and noticing how many people may – depending upon how love is faring for them at the moment – feel left out of celebrations with a particular focus on its romantic forms. For the recently widowed, or between relationships, or unhappily coupled, those struggling to escape or reshape unhealthy connections, for all those still searching for a life partner, or whose orientation or choice of partner may cause alienation or fear, February 14th can be a gnawing reminder of what's missing, an ordeal to endure or get beyond.

Perhaps others share my reservations not for, but about, Valentine's Day. Do you find the idea that many might feel excluded from the "party" somewhat perverse, in light of Pema Chödrön's message above? As a welcoming religious community, we are called here to think of love in its broader terms, as opening our hearts and minds to overcoming our own unique biases and prejudices. To look at what's missing on the cultural landscape, and celebrate love in all its many forms, not just the romantic. We seek to cast an ever-widening circle of inclusion, inviting all who wish to come inside, and join us in the circle of belonging. That all may be blessed...

– Rev. Carole

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<p>Minister's Office Hours Tuesday & Thursday, 2:30 – 4:30 pm Please respect the Minister's sabbath, Sunday afternoon and Monday. <i>For emergency pastoral care, phone:</i> 1. Rev. Carole 2. Sooky Dunton 3. Joyce Booth</p>
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"To live a creative life, we must lose our fear of being wrong. ... *Joseph Chilton Pearce*

"When you work you are a flute through whose heart the whispering of the hours turn to music. To love life through labor is to be intimate with life's inmost secret.

All work is empty save when there is love, for work is love made visible."

*Kahlil Gibran
from Awakening the Buddha Within*



Calendar and Schedule

SUN 6 10:00AM SERVICE: HARVEY WHITE
 TUES 8 9:30AM GRANNIES WORKSHOP
 WED 9 9:00AM PROGRAMME COMMITTEE
 SUN 13 10:00AM SERVICE: L'AMOUR
 TUES 15 7:00PM NO-NAME SMALL GROUP
 SUN 20 10:00AM SERVICE: MORAL LANDSC.
 TUES 22 6:45PM BOARD MEETING
 MARDI 22 19H30 CERCLE GAULOIS
 FRI 25 9:30AM NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE
 SUN 27 10:00AM SERVICE: INS SAMARITANS

Board of Trustees

You have elected this board to take care of business, please discuss your hopes and concerns with any member:

Keith Baxter	President
Adele Ernstrom	Vice-President
Mary-Ann McCarron	Secretary
Rachel Garber	Treasurer
Howard Hale	Member at large
Lin Jensen	Member at large

This is your newsletter !!!

Next issue of Newsletter is March 2011

Deadline: ***February 20.***

Please send photos, or write your contribution on paper, parchment, or computer. Send to the newsletter committee in person or by email to newsletter@uuestrie.ca.

Workshop for Small Congregations Saturday, March 26th in Guelph

You are invited to attend a Central Region workshop on building vitality and hope in small congregations. Come and share your experiences and learn together. We are thankful to the Unitarian Congregation of Guelph for agreeing to host this day-long event.

The fee for the event will be low to help ensure participation.

Please contact Helen Armstrong (helen@cuc.ca) for more information.