

February 2013 février



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 3

Jane Gowman

“Spirit of Play III”

A morning devoted entirely to inter-generational games with our children and adults: building our inter-generational community, one game at a time.

Downstairs, in Stoddard Hall

Service Leader: Jane Gowman

Coffee Convenor: popcorn

Flower Convenor: Sooky Dunton

February 10

Mr. Keith Baxter

“Speaking Our Conscience”

A worship service the main body of which will be an examination of the resolutions being brought to the CUC AGM in May, in a World Café format.

Downstairs, in Stoddard Hall

Service Leader: Keith Baxter

Coffee Convenor: Heather Lewis

Flower Convenor: Sooky Dunton

February 17

Mr. Keith Baxter

“Mythicisim”

Was Jesus an actual historical person who was later mythologized as the Christ, or was it the other way around?

Today will also be Sharing Our Faith Sunday, with the plate collection to be donated to the Sharing Our Faith Fund of the CUC, to help fund projects in Canadian UU congregations.

Downstairs, in Stoddard Hall

Service Leader: Keith Baxter

Musician: Keith Baxter

Coffee Convenor: Mathesons

Flower Convenor: Sooky Dunton

February 24

Rev. Carole Martignacco

“Wise Elders II”

This follow-up session completing the work begun with the Eight Gates of Wisdom in January, will focus on mining our lived experience and leaving a spiritual legacy, willing our "values and vision" to future generations. Those who wish may participate in some personal writing. We shall reserve 10 minutes at the end of the service to review our suggested submission to the CUC resolutions process.

Downstairs, in Stoddard Hall

Coffee Convenor: Jensens

Flower Convenor: Sooky Dunton

March 3

Rev. Brendan Hadash

“Gratitude”

It has been said that if we are reduced to but one prayer, a prayer of thanks will suffice. This Sunday Rev. Brendan Hadash, former minister here in North Hatley and now minister at the UU congregation in St. Johnsbury VT, will speak on the human need to express gratitude and the wonderful effects it has on the human spirit.

Downstairs, in Stoddard Hall

Service Leader: Keith Baxter

Coffee Convenor: Janet Cowan Weber

Flower Convenor: Sooky Dunton

Experiencing the Christmas Pageant

I enter the sanctuary, take my place, sit down to take in what is before me: the womb-like holding space; pure and shimmering lights; a woman lighting candles in darkened places; musicians humming in harmony; children delighted to be part of something magical; an innkeeper preparing for weary travellers; an empty cradle waiting...

There is anticipation...special care and diligence is being given to the space, making it soft, warm, welcoming. Oh that it could be so in our world. My heart is heavy with the sheer weight of the global pain body. I weep.

Then...quietly...innocence, hope, new Life ushers in...calm.

A strong and clear voice pierces the silence, invoking: "If we found [this] place that the shepherds found, would we have eyes to see [it]?" A kaleidoscope of catastrophic images flit through my mind. I bow my head; the tears are still here but I give thanks, too, and accept the blessing of this painful year...I have been prepared to *See*.

Colleen Mac Dougall

RE News

I would like to first THANK EVERYONE in our church community who brought food, love, gifts, blessings and support to my family during the birth and welcoming of Annabeth-Grace Gowman-Brand.

My second big thank-you goes to Cassandra for her remarkable job as RE coordinator while I was away.

The children and I have begun working on a small finger puppet production that we hope to put on in the spring. Tickets will be .50 cents and go toward our summer ice cream fund.

Don't forget that in 2 weeks we will be having our 3rd Annual Intergenerational Games Day. Please bring your favourite game and get ready to spend your Sunday morning having snack and playtime as a community. If you are able to bring a veggie tray or crackers and cheese it would be appreciated.

If you have any questions, concerns or ideas please feel free to stop by the RE room on Sunday mornings.

Lindsay-Jane

Planning Ahead?

SAVE THESE SATURDAYS!

Sat., 23 March, 10 am to 2 pm: a short, one-day congregational retreat designed to have us think about a growth plan for UUEstrie, in which we shall explore the nuts and bolts of realizing the vision articulated in our visioning work last year. It is a question of direction as well as means. The more of us who participate, the stronger our vision going forward.

Sat., 6 April from 9:30 am: Spring cleanup day # 1. May hands make light work. Indoors or outdoors—it's up to you; and/or **Sat., 13 April**, from 9:30 am: Spring cleanup day #2. Join us for a few hours of cleaning and painting and whatnot, on either of these Saturdays.

Petition to ban the commercialization and possession of shark fins in the Canadian province of Quebec

Petition drafted by Mr. Jeffrey Gallant, Supported by the Member of the National Assembly for Drummond-Bois-Francis, Mr. Sébastien Schneeberger

Whereas the number of sharks killed for their fins is between 38 to 100 million per year throughout the world.

Whereas the practise of shark finning results in considerable waste since only 3 to 5% of the shark's overall mass is used and that the mutilated shark is tossed back into the sea to die.

.....

Whereas sharks play an indispensable role to naturally maintain marine ecosystems.

The signatories of this petition ask the National Assembly of Quebec to ban the commercialization and possession of shark fins in the province of Quebec.

To read about the issue, and sign the petition, go to www.geerg.ca/petition.html

Kevin



Minister's Reflection - Carole's Column

"Attitudes about religion are changing rapidly. These changes give us a breathtaking opportunity." – Peter Morales, UUA President

"There once was a world where the church functioned according to what some have called the 'attractional' model (others have named it the participatory model). People come to a place, consume the spiritual goods, and serve as patrons to 'meet the budget.' But a shift has happened. North American culture took new turns. Church consultant Anthony Robinson observed: 'Many dispirited, bewildered, paddling –as-fast-as-we-can, struggling or conflicted congregations have come to believe that what they are undergoing is about them. 'We are a bad church' or a dying church, or a failing church... Much of what's being faced and experienced by many mainline Protestant churches is not about them. It is about the end of an era, a sea change in the religious ecology of North America and the role of congregations in our society.'" – Peter Steinke, in A Door Set Open

I don't know what you've been reading on these frigid winter days, when the wind howls and the temperature drops to double digits below, and the afghan in the rocking chair by the fire beckons. I find the cold snaps and overcast snowy days a welcome excuse to catch up on my long-deferred reading list. This year, along with the detective novel, meditation guide and poetry under the tree, was a new book on congregational leadership. WOW! How exciting, you say? Okay, I'll admit – I gave it to myself. But let me tell you! When first I picked up Peter Steinke's book quoted above, I kept reading through lunchtime. He could be looking right through our red doors here at UU Estrie.

Steinke talks about a shift from *Me* to *We*, which also fits with a recent article from the Winter issue of the UUA World, entitled "The End of iChurch". What's an iChurch? Like those personalized hand-held electronic devices, iPad or iPhone, it's got individualized appeal, capable of featuring all our favourite downloads

and personal "apps". The whole focus of iChurch is on the needs of the "I", how we answer the question - "What's in it for me?" The evolving church reaches beyond, focusing on the needs of the community, the larger world.

Morales writes in the same issue: "The religious group that is growing by leaps and bounds is the 'nones' – people with no religious connection....This trend signals a tectonic shift in our culture. The implications for Unitarian Universalism are profound." He says that 25 percent of today's population claim no religious affiliation – up from one in twenty just 50 years ago. Why the sea change? Steinke cites several components, including postmodern philosophy, dogmatic atheism, super-modernity, shifts in world view due to discoveries in both science and religion, rapid change in an increasingly globalized culture. Morales adds to that the religious scandals in several denominations in the past half-century, along with violence in the name of religion throughout today's world, as causes of a growing scepticism about religious institutions.

Where's hope? Morales again: "This culture shift is also, and more importantly, a historic opportunity for Unitarian Universalism. The attitudes of the 'nones' align with ours. (They) may be rejecting the religious institutions they know, but they are not rejecting spirituality and religion...The truth is that millions upon millions of 'nones' are with us in spirit. They are hungry for spiritual depth and community." Our great challenge is to connect with them and engage them.

"The challenge for our congregations and our movement," asserts Morales, "is to engage people in an era in which people see religion as rigid, backward, and hypocritical." How do we do that? At the core of all our planning and strategizing, all our programming and outreach, is one constant challenge. Like the old proverb that goes, *who you are speaks louder than what you say*, our most powerful "rule of attraction" may be in authentically living out our UU values and principles in community. Who we are more important than what we do? Could it be that simple – that the way to "attract" new people is to be who we say we are – religiously?

May it be so, keep warm, and happy heart month!

- Rev. Carole



President's Message

Greetings from Gilbert (Phoenix) Arizona. We have a pop up on our lap top that gives us the weather in Sherbrooke each a.m. when we open the computer. The last two mornings the weather has

been warmer there than here! Its quite unusual.

We have been attending the VUU(Valley) Congregation each Sunday that we have been here.

They have more in their choir than we have in our congregation, And they had their first 2nd full service on Saturday this past week. There are at least five events on Sundays one can attend such as "Pray the Devil back to Hell" which documents the women of Libya's mass action for peace which we plan to see next week. There are also many, many events one can attend during the week which have something for everyone. We hiked with the group, an annual event on New Year's Day, which included not only VUU's but the public on a trek on the Apache Trail which winds through the true desert. We had a pot luck lunch with a VUU couple afterwards. They even have a motorcycle & scooter club. The services have many speakers and the choreography of them is to be envied. (Am I allowed to admit that ?) We have heard both the minister, the Reverend Andy Burnette and a worship associate, Reverend Linda Lloyd. give excellent sermons of which I hope to obtain copies which they generously allow. A recent undertaking has been the joining of the city council with several area churches of various denominations to look into the possibility of feeding dinner and breakfast along with bedding overnight, to the homeless of this suburb. An adjoining suburb has done this quite successfully. The project takes a lot of volunteers and they are to be admired for the many ways that "they walk the talk."

We also drove across the desert to Cathedral City to see Reverend Ken MacLean and stayed with him and Terry for a few days. He calls his home a paradise which it truly is. We were wined and dined in grand style and even returned richer, Ken took us to his church to

play bridge which he organizes each week. The tariff for the privilege is \$2.00 and the winner pockets half the take. The winner was Jaime so these interlopers may not be invited back. Ken does not have a date for his annual visit to our pulpit, yet. He send his love to all his friends in North Hatley as do Jaime and I.

Sooky

Denominational affairs

If you are a member, you get the Canadian Unitarian newsletter. On-line readers can access current and past issues at <http://www.cuc.ca/newsletter/canu.htm>

As well, the monthly ENews is available at <http://www.cuc.ca/enews/>

The CUC is looking to reduce the number of printed copies of the *Canadian Unitarian*, both in an effort to be environmentally conscious and to reduce costs.

To sign up for however you want to receive the *Canadian Unitarian*, make your selection at: <http://cuc.ca/the-canadian-unitarian/>

CUC Month

UUEstrie, along with many other Canadian UU congregations, will celebrate **February** as 'CUC month'. The Canadian Unitarian Council is our national organization, uniting 48 or 50 congregations from Comox to Halifax, and providing us with workshops, gatherings, and congregational support services, as well as a national voice for social justice.

The CUC is *us*, really, and is actively seeking to enhance the democratic nature of its operations. The next major CUC gathering is the Annual Conference and Meeting, to be held this year in Calgary, on the long weekend in May. A number of resolutions will be voted on at that meeting, and our chance to participate in determining the precise wording of the resolutions, or to make any comments whatsoever, occurs in February. We will be taking one Sunday in February (the 10th) to examine these resolutions in order to be able to give our feedback.

February 17 we will dedicate the collection plate as a special collection for the CUC Sharing

Our Faith Fund, a fund that gives grants to different churches for special, growth oriented projects. Please plan ahead to be able to give generously to the plate that day.

We shall also try to name our delegates to the CUC annual meeting in February, so they can have time to get in the loop of what is going on, and be able to vote on those resolutions as *we* see fit.

Another CUC gathering this spring is a Religious Exploration leaders retreat in Halifax, in March. Our Jane hopes she can make it to that one. Meanwhile, look for the March issue of the Canadian Unitarian magazine, which will contain lots of info on the gathering in Calgary. If you can fit that into your life and travel plans, it will certainly be a rich and enjoyable experience with our UU sisters and brothers from across the county. Think about it.

Keith

Report from *Harvest the Power*

Harvest the Power is a 22-hour curriculum full of excellent workshop exercises, designed to help leadership groups in congregations manage and lead their congregations to excellence and vitality.

Hosted by our neighbours, First Universalist Parish in Derby Line VT, on January 11 and 12 just past, it was well facilitated and engaging. It was also a wonderful chance to meet old and new UU friends, our homologues in nearby UU congregations, folks we don't see often enough. (We used to see them more when we were in the NH-VT District of the UUA, which we were until 2001.)

Mount Mansfield UUC, in Jericho VT, is a 10-year old, lay-led startup in suburban Burlington VT with 80 in church on a Sunday, at least half of them kids! Their parking lot started to be full to overflowing on Sunday mornings only this year after they installed a new sign out front. (Their building, a newly renovated old barn, is on a main access road into the city.)

St. Johnsbury VT, served part-time by the Reverend Brendan Hadash, is our nearest UU neighbour after Derby Line VT. They are growing slowly it seems, both incarnationally and numerically, despite financial constraints,

continually making fuller use of their building, a middle-aged brick Universalist church in downtown St J.

Derby Line is a real community church with an old Universalist Church building and a spacious Hall that they added-on several years ago, that is used for a variety of purposes. When our workshop ended at 5 pm on Saturday, we had to set up for the square dancers coming in after supper, who would then have to set up for the worship service they would hold in the hall the next morning (similar to ourselves holding our Winter services in Stoddard Hall). Each Thanksgiving they all pitch in organizing, cooking, and serving a free Thanksgiving turkey supper for 700 people, including delivering 200 meals-on-wheels. The next project they are talking about is installing a photovoltaic array sufficient to generate electrical power for themselves and a number of nearby businesses and other properties.

Derby Line have also appointed one of their members as Lay Minister. Susan-Lynn Johns preaches twice a month and participates actively on their Board and in every other aspect of their church operation.

Part 2 is still to come in February. I'll keep you posted.

Keith

THREE QUOTES from Michael Meade, in *Where Have All the Wise Men Gone?*:

"An old idea suggests that the only ones more idealistic than young people are the elders. It's not that the elders naively believe that the great ideals of humanity, peace and justice, healing and compassion, are simply attainable. Rather, the idea is that without a commitment to such ideals a culture simply collapses into political infighting and economic warfare."

"Genuine wisdom relaxes hostility, settles common fears and makes inner balance and longer vision more possible."

"A culture falls apart when the dreams of its youth are rejected and the visions of its elders are neglected."

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<p>Minister's Office Hours Wednesday & 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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Thank You Townships Tellers

A warm thank you once again to tellers Ann and Michel, Louise, Lucie and Jason, as well as Heather D., Joyce, Phyllis, and Keith, who all made our 19th(!) annual storytelling worship on Jan. 13 'the best ever'. (several people spoke of it that way)..

A knitting group

.. is forming at the church to knot and chat once a week, probably in the afternoon. Please let Phyllis Baxter know if you are interested. All levels of knitters are welcome.

Calendar and Schedule

SUN 3 10:00AM SERVC: SPIRIT OF PLAY
TUES 5 9:30AM GRANNIES WORKSHOP
6:30PM BOARD MEETING
THURS 7 9:30AM PROGRAM COMMITTEE
SUN 10 10:00AM SERVICE: WORLD CAFE
TUES 12 10:00AM COMTE ON MINISTRY
SUN 17 10:00AM SERVICE: MYTHICISM
SUN 24 10:00AM SERVICE: WISE ELDERS
MARDI 26 19H30 CERCLE GAULOIS
WED 27 7:00PM NO-NAME SMALL GRP

Board of Trustees

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

Sooky Dunton	President
Keith Baxter	Past President, acting Treasurer
Adele Ernstrom	Secretary
Mary-Ann McCarron	Vice-President
Heather Lewis	Member at large
Mary-Lynn Ross	Member at large
Lin Jensen	Member at large

This is your newsletter !!!

Next issue of Newsletter is March 2013

Deadline: **Feb. 20.**

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

Congratulations

Congratulations are in order for Scott Stoddard, friend of UUEstrie, and son of member Gordon Stoddard, who won the coveted Staff Award for outstanding service to Bishop's University in 2012.