

nouvelles estrie news

December-January 2014-15 décembre-janvier



Events this Month

All Sunday services start at 10:30 am unless otherwise specified.
We have an active children's program during our Sunday service, at which all children are warmly welcome

November 29, 8 p.m. **Chœur des Sangs Mêlés** **“World Music”**

The singers of Le Chœur des Sangs Mêlés will carry you off on a vocal journey to the four corners of the world, offering up captivating rhythms, exotic languages, thrilling harmonies . . . and incomparable energy rooted in diversity!

Unitarian Universalist Church of North Hatley, 201 Main St., North Hatley Suggested donation \$12; proceeds to Avenir Togo Canada. There will be African crafts for sale at some of the shows, for the benefit of Togolese NGOs. Information: choeursangsmeles.ca

Upstairs, in the Sanctuary

November 30 **Rev. Karen Tse** **“How to Stop Torture”**

Rev. Karen Tse is a UU minister and former defense attorney. In too many countries, it's still normal to torture prisoners for confessions and information. Tse works to end that, through International Bridges to Justice, complementing the work of Amnesty International. After a 13-minute TED Talk by Tse, we will participate in Amnesty International's annual "Write for Rights" campaign. Service Leaders: Rachel Garber and Adele Ernstrom. Music: Debra Fougère and friends.

Downstairs, in Stoddard Hall

Service Leader: Rachel Garber & Adele Ernstrom
Musician: Debra Fougère & Friends
Coffee Convenor: Phyllis Baxter

December 7 **Rev. Carole Martignacco** **“Blue Christmas”**

Christmas can be a tough time, stressful in its busyness, its compulsion toward buying and spending. It can be lonely for those deprived of family and companionship, or who are experiencing hardships of any kind. Let's recognize both the dark and light of this holiday time, and turn in simplicity to celebrating the true gifts we give each other in loving community.

Special meeting to follow at 12:15, Lunch provided.

Downstairs, in Stoddard Hall
Coffee Convenor: Gudrun Brand

December 14 ~ 4:00 pm **“A Renaissance Christmas in the Forest”**

This is our annual seasonal community celebration with, this year, an original play which will include some musical offerings. It will be performed in our sanctuary and will be followed by a turkey supper downstairs in Stoddard Hall at 6pm. Welcome and a Merry Christmas to one and all!

Upstairs, in the Sanctuary

December 21 ~ 4:00 p.m. **Rev. Carole Martignacco** **“Carols and Candlelight”**

Songs and readings to evoke diverse traditions of the world at this time, and especially the love, peace and joy that is Christmas. Bring hats, scarves, mittens and other items of warmth to help trim our tree. Various guest musicians will share their gifts, and a festive Wassail follows the service.

December 28, January 4

No services these two weeks

January 11
Townships Tellers
“Stories, Stories, Stories”

A morning worship consisting entirely of Stories, told by members and friends augmented by special guests from the Townships Tellers. If you would like to tell, just speak to Keith Baxter. Potluck lunch will follow the storytelling service; all are welcome to stay for lunch, and invited if they can, to bring a 'pot' to share.

Service Leader: Keith Baxter

January 18
Rev. Carole Martignacco
“Holy Fools”

We inherit from the ancient Romans annual customs of celebrating the silly, the madcap and ridiculous, overturning the usual order of things, in a spirit of mayhem and merry-making as the year turns. Join us for some holy madness, as we look at traditions of sacred humour across the world and celebrate what makes us laugh.

Musician: Frances Alvo

January 25
Ms. Heather Davis
“Writing One's Story”

A brief talk, including actual writing exercises for all. Leave your inner critic at home and feel the therapeutic and revelatory qualities of simply writing. Service Leader: Kevin Jensen

Fall Gathering Report

Debra, Rachel, and Rev. Carole went to the gathering in Halifax, attending different workshops. Rachel's report is in her column, Carole's will appear next issue, here is Debra's:

I Chose Music: A Pathway

One of the essential elements of worship is music. This was similarly expressed by the organizers of the Eastern Region Fall Gathering in Halifax, Nova Scotia in their description for the workshop stream, Music: A Pathway, which I had the pleasure of attending.

Music: A Pathway– Music is a powerful way that members, of all theological perspectives can connect, with the deeper parts of themselves. Music and singing get beyond language and helps us to build community.

I was pleasantly surprised when I saw a harmonium (A traditional instrument used by Hindu devotees) lying in wait for the Bhajans (devotional music) to be led by a yoga teacher. We began with breathing exercises, chanting Om and then sang a call and response song of devotion to Durga. This was a great start to the program which continued with a Shamanic drumming circle as we were all given various percussion instruments and lead through a group rhythm exercise which evoked the shakers and movers amongst us. The instructor then guided us through a meditation where we discovered a mystical treasure and message for our journey. The four elements were honoured with dancing and drumming after which we were served a feast fit for the Gods.

The second part involved learning to listen to each other with the Halifax congregation's own choir director, who also led us in a practice of a hymn for the Sunday morning service. It was a quick run through and then we were moving and singing again to the Dances of Universal Peace. The Dances of Universal Peace are a participatory, group form of "meditation in motion" that honours the sacred traditions of the world. And if that wasn't fun enough, we ended with a concert by the church's own house band called The After Practice Band who played a sampling of popular music designed to help the 'new comer' feel welcome and comfortable with the worship service by making it more accessible through music.

At the end of the day, this 'work' shop seemed to be more of a 'play' shop and left me with a song in my heart and singing the praises of our Maritime hosts for this years Annual Eastern Regions Fall Gathering of UUs.

Debra Fougere

Firewood available:

Several mature birch trees on our property have been cut down for safety reasons (they were threatening our buildings). There are a number of 16-inch long round pieces available in the back yard of the church. They need to be split and stacked for a year to be good stove wood. Would anyone like to take some home, in exchange for a donation to the church? Speak to Keith for info.



Minister's Reflection - Carole's Column

Late November as I write this, and I've just come in from morning coffee on the deck! The pond is frozen, but I've been sitting coat-less in the last reluctant lawn chair, soaking in warm sunlight, enjoying bright birdsong in a muted landscape that days ago was blanketed in heavy snow. Winter has momentarily rolled back its covers for a brief glimpse of green in the grass again, and this spirit is grateful for the reprieve. Forecasts assure us snow will return in a mere matter of days, and I know I'll learn to love as always its stark monochromatic beauty. Today I aim to fit in one last autumn hike under these magnificent slate blue skies.

This month's column does double duty: in our calendar of words, December is Hope, and January is Story. As the year winds down, our custom is to combine issues for the next two months, not for lack of news so much as a need to focus energies on the very demanding months ahead, with the end of year holiday programmes and their aftermath.

In the Christian calendar, the period preceding Christmas designates this as a time of waiting. The forty days of Advent are reminiscent of forty years the Israelites wandered in the desert before gaining entrance to the Holy Land. These roughly four weeks or so to prepare oneself for the coming of light into the world and the birth of the holy. Each week is assigned a particular quality of spirit to cultivate. Symbolic candles are lit each Sunday on the Advent wreath, three violet in colour and one rose, as the gathered community reflects together upon first hope, then peace, joy, and finally love. So in our weekly Opening to the Spirit column appearing Fridays in the Sherbrooke Record, in deference to my Christian clergy colleagues, we chose by majority vote to write on the advent themes for the next four weeks leading up to Christmas. Somehow I find this idea of focusing on reflective waiting a good deal more attractive than the frenzied consumerism that already looms darkly on the cultural horizon.

For December, let's turn toward HOPE. I invite you to adopt with me this ritual pattern of waiting, and reflect upon some basic qualities that shape the human spirit. Who of us has not needed from time to time to turn inward and ask: What does it mean to live in hope? What do you hold yourself in readiness for? What layers of hope do I hold in my heart - for my own small life, for my friends and family, for others unknown whose lives are equally precious to me, for this beloved spiritual home UU Estrie, for my village, for the world, for the coming year? What insight would be ours if we spent an entire month, or a week each year asking: What fills us with hope, keeps us from falling over the edge into despair? Have you ever in your life lost hope; how was it restored? How do you give hope to others? Have you ever taken a "leap of hope" - risking life as is for a shift into the unknown? What, like the bird at the edge of dawn, inspires you to sing, remembering the light of morning that always comes, however dark the night?

January's word is STORY. We celebrate mid-month with our annual Storytelling service, when we'll again be visited by gifted professional storytellers who charm our hearts with life truths in the most fanciful of stories. What makes a story true? Beyond the true or imaginative tales we tell each other or read in books or watch in film or in newscasts, we are all writing our own story, as we live our lives every day. By choices we make, opportunities we follow - and those we decline, by the random events beyond our control and how we adapt to them. Ask yourself: if there were an overall theme to my story, what would it be? What would be the defining moment, the highpoint in my personal saga? What qualities of spirit does my life story embody? Has there ever been a fork in the road (hint: there are always forks in the road!) in which I made a momentous decision - whether conscious of it at the time - that changed or shaped everything to follow. How do I tell my story, and to whom? What do I know of the rich stories of those who people my life? How do I hear and respond to the stories of others? And what is the larger collective story of our times?

More than enough to reflect about! Blessings to all as this year ends, another begins, and our story together continues! - Rev. Carole



President's Report

What makes you come alive?

"Find out what makes you come alive, and then go do it." That was my best take-away from the Social Justice stream at the Eastern Fall Gathering in Halifax. Vyda Ng, executive director of the CUC, led the workshop, with some dozen participants.

We shared what we are doing on local fronts – pride festivals, people's climate march, soup kitchens, winter clothing, peace symposiums, Grandmothers-to-Grandmothers, advocacy for persons with mental illness, UN groups, poverty awareness, environment. And more.

We charted a strategy for change: Start with a small group. Add research, let knowledge rise. Find common will to take action, and help it spread to others. Then engage with our elected representatives to build the political will for change.

The CUC has a full-time social responsibility coordinator, April Hope, at april@cuc.ca. She works with 11 monitoring groups to track various current issues. Some of them are truth and reconciliation, a diversity initiative, assisted dying, pervasive surveillance, and divestment from corporations whose actions endanger the environment. The strategy is to connect, collaborate and communicate – to be more creative about how we do the important work of social justice.

Our brainstorming led us to a combined portrait of UU social justice work as having six characteristics. Being collaborative. Creating political will. Being the change. Involving personal growth. Having concrete impact. And giving visibility to the Unitarian Universalist principles and movement.

What makes us come alive? It is most likely something that gives our lives congruence – that embodies the change we want to see in the world.

Rachel Garber

Caring Corner

Congratulations to Michael Jensen, who recently passed his pre-doctorial exam at U Sherbrooke in "photonics" - which has to do

with quantum physics applied to molecules. If you can understand that phrase, feel free to chat with Michael about your theories.

It's a joy to see Mike Matheson these days, who is now a member of University Singers and will be performing in Handel's Messiah on December 6th at the Salle Maurice O'Brady at Université de Sherbrooke.

As we celebrate the coming season each in our own way, may we enjoy the warmth of family, friend and festivities. Let us also remember with loving support those who struggle through this season, for whom the year just past has brought losses of many kinds.

Special Thanks this Month

Thanks to all who have been helping to fill the box for Basic Necessities with warm wraps for the homeless this winter. Keep your donations coming!

Interfaith and community outreach:

1) Student Hospitality Supper on Nov. 21 – Huge thanks to the enthusiastic team that fed 56 students from Bishops, Champlain and U Sherbrooke a warm chili supper. Among those providing chili, cornbread, veggies and dessert – cooking, serving and/or cleaning-up along with Rev. Carole as coordinator, were: Joyce Booth, Jeoy Marosi, Heather Lewis, Janet Cowan-Weber, Joe Weber, Rachel Garber, Dylan Togane, Lin and Kevin Jensen, Phyllis and Keith Baxter, Gudrun Brand, Chantal Michaud, David Turner, Edson Warner, Camille Bouskela. BRAVO! We are the smallest church with the largest team!

2) Genie en Gris/Autumn Genius – a series of luncheon concerts and talks with a grant in cooperation with Quintette Estria and Uplands and funded by CRE de Estrie. Many thanks to those who participated in the kick-off event in this series of six on Nov. 7, and special thanks to Mary Lynn Ross and Ouida Moliner for organizing set-up and clean-up. The concert featured the genius of Brahms, who in his sixties composed the fascinating work, Trio Opus 114, performed for us by Pauline Farrugia on clarinette, Erich Kory on cello, and Danielle Bernstein on piano. Thanks to the funding for this program, our piano will be tuned regularly. Mark your calendars for the entire series: 6 Feb., 6 March, 10 April, 1 May, 5 June.

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Minister's Office Hours
Wednesday , 2:30 – 4:30 pm
& Friday 10:30 – 12:30
Please respect the Minister's sabbath, Sunday
afternoon and Monday.
For emergency pastoral care, phone:
1. Rev. Carole
2. Joyce Booth

For Rent:

The upstairs apartment in the parsonage is a 4 ½ with two private entrances and a back deck. Available January 2015. Speak to Keith for more information, and please refer anyone to this opportunity.

**Calendar and Schedule****DECEMBER**

SUN 7 10:30AM SERVICE: BLUE CHRISTMAS
12:15PM **SPECIAL MEETING**
SUN 14 4:00PM CHRISTMAS IN THE FOREST
6:00PM TURKEY SUPPER
SUN 21 10:30AM CAROLS & CANDLELIGHT

JANUARY

SUN 11 10:30AM SERVICE: STORYTELLING
SUN 18 10:30AM SERVICE: HOLY FOOLS
THUR 22 10:00AM NEWSLETTER MEETING
SUN 25 10:30AM SERVICE: HEATHER DAVIS

Board of Trustees

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

Rachel Garber	President
Heather Lewis	Vice-President
Joey Marosi	Secretary
Keith Baxter	Treasurer
Mary-Lynn Ross	Member at large
Debra Foug�re	Member at large

This is your newsletter !!!

Next issue of Newsletter is February 2015

Deadline: January 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@uuestrie.ca.

NH FOOD SHELF

Please continue to bring non-perishable food items for the basket outside the church office door. Several families in our area will benefit from your kindness this winter.

Left: Luncheon after Genie en Gris concert, November 7.