



UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF NIAGARA

A church for people
with enquiring minds

December 2009



Sunday Services

Dec. 6 - Climate Change: Mitigation vs Adaptation – *Phil Curtis*

S.L. S. Watson

A discussion of real numbers, great changes, and what we can/should do.

Dec. 13 - A Post-Theistic Conception of God – *John Storm*

Dec. 20 - Solstice Ceremony

– *Tara Kriyachanda and Donna Bothan*

"Come celebrate with joyful pleasure." Bring some food to share (savoury or sweet), and let's help the wheel turn and begin again.

Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve celebration

– *Julianne Momirov*

(Margaret Laurence's Unitarian Christmas Story for children)

Dec. 27 - CUC AGM

Sofia Vuorinen and John Mayer will be service leaders on this date. Sofia will be filling us in on what she learned as a delegate for our congregation in Thunder Bay this past May. John and Sofia will be discussing their roles as UU-UNO envoys and giving you information about how you too can become a UU-UNO envoy for our congregation.

Who Are We?

I have known Joan Rothman in various capacities since I started attending and then becoming a member of the Unitarian Congregation of Niagara. She informed me that she is a Cockney from East London, England and was born within the sounds of the Bells of Bow. Joan had various reasons for coming to live in Canada. After World War Two, she found her original home in England as dismal, dull and not progressing very well. People had the expectation and hope that after the war, things would perk up but they did not. Everything was progressing along very slowly.

Her ex-husband had been in Canada with the Royal Airforce. When the Superintendent for the Board of Education in Ontario came to England recruiting teachers, her husband decided to take him up on his offer and they both immigrated to Niagara Falls where he taught special education and Joan taught in the primary grades. Joan and Andrea Gravelle became good friends through their teaching at Lincoln Centennial Elementary School in St. Catharines. When Andrea heard that she had taken philosophy courses at Brock and that Dr. John Mayer had been one of her professors, she asked her if she wouldn't like to come to the Unitarian Congregation of Niagara and hear him speak there. The answer was a big resounding "yes" and here we are today with one of the most active members of our congregation. Joan has been on various committees. The committees have been for membership, denominational affairs, and the social committee. Presently Joan is on the religious education for adults committee along with Marie Belliveau. She has even been President of the Board!

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Unitarian Congregation of Niagara

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2009/2010

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VICE PRESIDENT:

Jon Stahl

PAST PRESIDENT:

Fred Bolton

LAY CHAPLAINS:

Ed Gilbert

Valerie Jaeger

Julianne Momirov

SECRETARY:

Anita Miecznikowski

TREASURER:

Carl Beckett

MEMBER AT LARGE:

Ed Gilbert

CHOIR/MUSIC:

Penny Blake

COMMUNICATIONS:

Bruce Millar

DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS:

under review

LAY CHAPLAINCY:

Fred Bolton

MEMBERSHIP:

Jim Glassford

NEWSLETTER:

Sofia Vuorinen

PASTORAL CARE:

Jenny Leach, John Berry

PHONE: Beverly Russell

PROGRAM:

Julianne Momirov

PROPERTY:

Peter Skelton

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: Tba

CONTACT FOR ADULT RE:

Joan Rothman &

Marie Belliveau

RENTAL: John Northover

SEXUAL & GENDER

DIVERSITY:

Joan Wiley

SOCIAL: Hilde Wheeler

SOCIAL JUSTICE:

Marie Belliveau

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Rhonda Armstrong

TRUSTEES:

Andrea Gravelle, Don Herne

James Wilson

WEBSITE:

Roy Blake, Bruce Millar

Joan had been exposed to many denominations but none appealed to her. She is not a joiner; however she attended a workshop led by Monica Hornyansky for would-be-members of the Unitarian Congregation of Niagara. This workshop plus her association with John led her to become a member of our congregation. To quote Joan, "I found my place." We once again have struck lucky with her finding us and calling us "my place."

Just a reminder!

The Pledge dinner is on December 5 at 6:00 p.m. and there is a suggested donation of \$20.00.

Entertainment will be provided by Sara Jordan and Terry Walsh.

The sign up sheet is on the bulletin board at the church or call me at 905-358-3426. The last day to sign up is November 29.

– Rhonda Armstrong



Climate Change: Mitigation vs Adaptation

I humbly would like to say that my presentation (multimedia) is about a very important topic and I hope many of you attend. I think the evidence about future changes will shock you and we should know the facts, not just opinion based on nothing. The science of climate change is well understood and predicts the extinction of about 70% of species alive today. It also proves that unless we stop using fossil fuels now, the impact on human populations will be devastating; not right away, but in the not too distant future.

Please come out and listen. The science is actually quite interesting even if the outcome is bleak. But the more people who know the consequences, then the faster we can do something about it.

Looking forward to seeing you on the 6th of December and talking with you.

Thank you,
Philip Curtis, P.Eng.

Congregation News

Membership

1. Barbara Bennett has transferred her membership to our Congregation.
2. We have a supply of pamphlets now available for guests and new persons to our Church.
3. As Christmas is fast approaching I would like to give you this message from one of my favourite spiritual-religious writers, Forrest Church. You may be aware that Forrest Church was minister emeritus at All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church in New York city for many years. When he was diagnosed with incurable cancer, he set out to write (what he believed was to be his last book) "Love and Death". This message is taken from his book and was given to his congregation on Christmas Eve during a time when his father was seriously ill. There were a thousand in attendance.

"To celebrate the birth of Jesus is to affirm life's sacred potential by attesting to the power of love to remake humankind. With his birth we may each, in a way, be born again, renewed in that love which alone can save our world and give meaning to our lives."

Rev. Church said he was thinking of his father when he said these words and of a gift his father had given to him nearly thirty years ago, The Jefferson Bible, and of Jefferson's own definition of religion: "It is in our lives and not in our words that our religion must be read."

Merry Christmas to all!

Jim Glassford
Membership Co-ordinator

The Meaning of Membership

In her November notes Linda Thomson our area director focussed on "The Meaning of Membership." In this article Linda was referring to our membership and that of each congregation across Canada as part of the C.U.C. This was particularly meaningful to our U.C.N. congregation because recently Calvin Drake, President of the C.U.C. and Jennifer Dickson the Executive Director came to our church and discussed the role of the C.U.C. and the U.U. congregations across Canada.

As the article was rather a long one I have endeavored to put forth the salient points.

Linda says: "The C.U.C. is an association of congregations. Our members are the congregations in Canada. The C.U.C. through its board and staff in consultation with its member congregations works to support congregations in that collective responsibility. As part of their membership in the C.U.C. congregations and their members can reasonably expect to support the organization in a variety of ways. Some of the responsibilities of membership might include:

- stay informed, read C.U.C. materials that are circulated so that you are aware of current issues and initiatives.
- ensure you have the maximum number of delegates allowed at the C.U.C. annual meeting
- remit annual program contributions as promised and on time
- provide accurate and timely information to the C.U.C. office so that accurate membership

records, leadership lists are up to date

- use the supports and services offered

In return for their support, congregations can expect to receive benefits too. These may include:

- training for congregational leaders in areas such as stewardship, membership, conflict management, volunteer development, worship planning etc.
- coaching and support for congregational leaders
- leadership training through C.U.U.L. school
- administration of the Lay Chaplaincy program
- a voice on national issues—various monitoring groups prepare statements and press releases consistent with resolutions passed at Annual meetings, and
- publication and electronic forums that support membership awareness of the work of the C.U.C. and which provide and support cross-congregational connections.

Linda's article was detailing the mutual relationship between congregations and the C.U.C. Each individual congregation however exists in a mutual relationship with its membership. At present our congregation is involved in two major projects. Firstly, through our Canvass we are doing our best to ensure that our church will be able to maintain both our building and our programs as well as our outreach commitments. Secondly, the Nominations Committee will be seeking volunteers to serve either on the Executive or as a Chairperson on one of our committees. The success of both projects is vital if U.C.N. is

to be able to continue to be a liberal voice in the area. The members of U.C.N. have always come forward to meet the above needs so please step up once again.

*Yours in faith and fellowship,
Joan Rothman*

UCN Board Minutes - October 15/09

I. Minutes: M/S/C Ed/Carl

- not everyone is getting the minutes. Bruce reported that there had been a glitch. He also said that there is no intention to put members' addresses on the internet.

II. Business Arising:

- Ad Hoc CUC Relations Committee:

John suggests 5 broad-based questions. The committee will meet on Sunday to make recommendations.

- Sexual & Gender Diversity Committee: The workshop planned for October 17 was cancelled for lack of response.

- Canvass: - well-written letter by Carl

- SPI (Strategic Perimeter Initiative) – fence on hold

- Out of the Cold: UCN will be responsible for Friday, Jan. 22, 2010 at Knox Presbyterian Church from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m., setting up tables, serving the meal and doing the dishes. Expect 150-160 people. Talk to Hilde if you want to volunteer.

III. New Business

- Nominations Committee: to have volunteers for the committee by Nov. 15

- Electric Piano: Theresa has looked at pianos. Penny wants to look at the models. Carl can tell her which ones Theresa saw.

- cost approx. \$4300. Money can come out of the Endowment Fund. Vote at the December meeting

- Laptop purchase: Roy suggests purchasing a laptop computer. Michael suggests the cheapest robust computer about \$400 - \$500. Will investigate the costs of a computer and printer for the next meeting

- Other: Seder celebration. Penny will send a sign-up sheet around in 2010 to plan for April 9

- Music for Pledge Dinner – Penny. CD's for background. Musicians for 45 minutes with an honoraria of \$50 each

- Membership is now 59.

Meeting went in camera to discuss the Chairmanship of the Lay Chaplaincy.

Ten Reasons to Bring Home the Troops from Afghanistan Now

Both John Mayer and myself are UU-UNO envoys. It is our duty to promote international awareness and global justice in our congregation. In addition, it is our duty to make people aware of how they can become UU-UNO envoys. We will be giving you further information about becoming an envoy on Sunday, December 27th.

It is my responsibility as a UU-UNO envoy, to create awareness in our congregation and community about issues such as the one discussed below. Below I am sharing with you what was shared with me by the

Canadian Peace Alliance and the Hamilton Coalition to Stop the War.

I attended an anti-war protest sponsored by the Hamilton Coalition to Stop the War at Mohawk College in Hamilton this month. We received a pamphlet written by the Canadian Peace Alliance which gave us ten reasons why we should bring the troops home now.

The Government of Canada and its NATO partners argue that we need to stay in Afghanistan to build democracy, support women's rights and to stop terrorists. If we scratch the surface of those claims, a very different picture emerges about what impact the war is having on the country and its people. Here are the ten reasons given by the Alliance as to why we should bring the troops home now. I will make a brief summary of each of the points and if you want more elaboration on each point then you can contact the Canadian Peace Alliance at www.acp.ca and cpa@web.ca.

1. NATO is not bringing peace to Afghanistan. In 2008 there was a 40% increase in civilian casualties as NATO bombs killed more people than at any point since the invasion of 2001. Resistance to the occupation increases with every new soldier sent to the war zone. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace states, "The mere presence of foreign soldiers fighting a war in Afghanistan is probably the single most important factor in the resurgence of the Taliban."

2. Women's rights have not improved for most women in the country. Honour killings and attacks on women continue to rise. The newly passed family law allows husbands to refuse food to their wives if they refuse sex and forces

women to ask permission to leave the house or find employment.

3. The war is un-winnable. Every attempt to occupy Afghanistan has ended in a humiliating defeat for the foreign forces. The British, Russians and now the U.S. and Canada have all been unable to control the country.

4. The war doesn't make us safer from terrorist attack. On the contrary, Canada is now seen as part of a hostile coalition. Canada continues to transfer Afghan detainees to be tortured and held indefinitely by the Afghan National Army and at Bagram Air Force Base.

5. The government of Afghanistan is dominated by warlords that are responsible for the killing of thousands of Afghan civilians during the civil war from 1992-1996.

6. Western policy towards Afghanistan has always been influenced by the need to secure energy corridors. Karzai is renewing plans to build a pipeline from the massive gas fields of the Caspian region through Afghanistan to Pakistan and India. This information was provided by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

7. There is little reconstruction in Afghanistan. Canada employs four times as many people to do public relations work than to do reconstruction. NATO drops more than 100 tons of bombs a month which destroy houses and infrastructure.

8. Opium production is now the chief business in the country. The government ministries in charge of halting opium production are run by

some of the biggest drug lords in the country. Karzai's brother is a "well-known" opium trafficker.

9. The war has already cost Canadian taxpayers \$18 billion and the Conservative government is not willing to make public the future costs of the war. The war is used to justify huge expenses in military spending. The Harper government proposes to spend \$490 billion on the military over the next 20 years.

10. The war is spreading and could engulf the entire region.

All of the initial objections for the war are being proven false. The Afghan people continue to live with poverty and violence and the war is worsening with each new NATO deployment. How many more people will be killed before Canada and the other NATO countries leave? The Canadian Peace Alliance states "IT'S TIME TO BRING THE TROOPS HOME."

Afghan MP Malalai Joya states "No nation can donate liberation to another nation. These values must be fought for and won by the people themselves. They can only grow and flourish when they are planted by the people in their own soil and watered by their own blood and tears."

– Sofia Vuorinen



Bye Bye Blues

"By special request of many who saw last week's film A War Story; BYE BYE BLUES will be shown December 18/09 @ 7:00p.m. A touching and absorbing story of Ben Wheeler's wife, Nell, coming to grips with reality: sometimes people get to live the way they want; more often they find themselves living the way they must, because their economic and emotional survival depends upon their being able to do so. When priorities change suddenly, radically, and against one's will, the situation becomes especially stressful. There are those who learn to cope, and those who fall by the wayside; either of the foregoing includes every one of us.

You will be deeply involved in this woman's conflicts. You will admire her, and care very much about what happens to her." This is another Anne Wheeler film.



Out of the Cold

We are in need of many more volunteers for the Out of the Cold Outreach Project, Jan 22, 2010, 4:30 - 8:30 p.m. To date only 17 have signed up and we need again as many. We did ourselves proud last year and we would like to keep up our good record! Please email Hilde Wheeler ah_wheeler@yahoo.ca or call 905 685 4936.

From the CUC...

Position Available

The CUC has advertised for a Project Coordinator. The job description is at <http://www.charityvillage.com/cvnet/viewlisting.aspx?id=204224> - please feel free to pass this on to anyone who you feel may be interested.

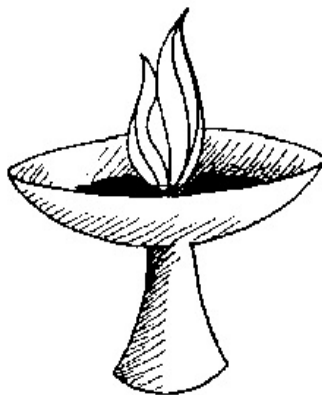
If you have any questions, please contact me at phil@cuc.ca.

Philip Strapp
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Installation

Installation of Rev. John Marsh at First Unitarian in Ottawa on Nov. 16th. To receive copy of media release and bio contact:

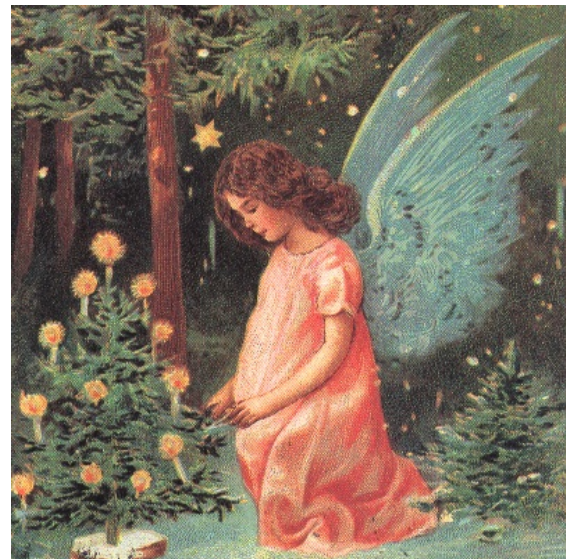
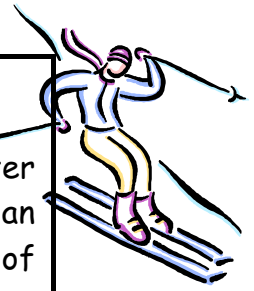
Valerie Cousins
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Come sleep with us!

Planning to come to the Winter Olympics 2010? Beacon Unitarian Church in the Tri-Cities suburb of Vancouver, BC is offering in-home bed and breakfast, January through March, 2010.

For information go to
www.BeaconUnitarian.org
or call registrar, Joy Silver
at (604) 939-2213
or e-mail odetojoy@telus.net



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