



UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF NIAGARA

A church for people
with enquiring minds

May 2010

Sunday Services

May 2 Who Will Defend Our Water

– Mark Mattson S.L. J. Mayer

Environmental justice means everyone has the right to safely access clean water. Everyone has the right to safely swim, drink and fish from their waters. Everyone has the right to participate in the decisions that will affect their water in the future. As an experienced environmental lawyer and Waterkeeper, Mark Mattson will talk about need for environmental justice if we are ever to attain a swimmable, drinkable, fishable Canada.

May 9 Celebrating the "T" in LGBTQ: one family's sacred journey

– Joan Wiley

This address won the international 2009 UUA Interweave Competition for sermons that focus on LGBTQ issues.

May 16 Matthias Toepp – Topic TBA

May 23 Religion and the Enlightenment

– David Galston S.L. T. Kriyachanda

Since the 17th Century, religion in all forms has come under the increasing scrutiny and critique of reason. The response from religion is almost always defensive. But is it time for peace? Has religion a new future and a different way of being part of human life?

May 30 Raging Grannies – Dana Sawchuk

S.L. J. Momirov

Who Are We . . .

(submitted to Editor by Barbara Bennett)

RN, 1974, Nashville, TN. I had a child to replace one I'd placed for adoption, to have someone who would love me. I considered myself bisexual. I had a drinking problem. That year I got sober, I started Parent Effectiveness training (works well with dogs, kids, and employees) and joined the Unitarians. I had grown up in an abusive fundamentalist family with a vindictive god. At ten I was going to hell. Tennessee UUs weren't as religion averse we are now, but they suited me. I was one of the first in my family to finish high school. I stayed sober. In 1978, I got a masters in Nursing, working/teaching as a nurse practitioner. Beside physicians, I came to believe I to could go to medical school. At 32 with no partner in sight I had my last child. She still lives in fear I'll have another. She should relax. In 1984 I went to Medical School in E. Tennessee. I bought a hobby farm, had horses, cows, chickens and briefly goats. My older daughter was (and is) an avid equestrian. My ex-husband sued and won custody of my children. The judge declared me a fit and probably good mother, but he would not give custody to a lesbian with a history of alcoholism and mental illness. My ex had quit the recovery program. The judge considered my continued membership damning. I lost an appeal.

Finishing med school, I moved to Huntsville Alabama for residency. When my youngest was 12 her father's drinking and drug use became dangerous. I sued again, requesting the court appoint an attorney to represent her...

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2010/2011

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Joan Rothman &
Marie Belliveau
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DIVERSITY:
Joan Wiley
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SPECIAL EVENTS:
Rhonda Armstrong
TRUSTEES:
Andrea Gravelle, Don Herne
Will Wilson
WEBSITE: Roy Blake

CUC Workplan

Response to Jennifer Dickson From: John Mayer

Dear Jennifer,

At yesterday's Board Meeting we discussed the CUC Workplan. Most of us had serious concerns. The deficits for both 2010 and 2011 were sources of serious concern.

Let me state my own concerns, which were not fully voiced yesterday, since as President, I chair the meeting.

1. The plans rapidly enlarge the CUC, with permanent staff. I believe that the CUC, while important for Canadians, has a very limited role for the denomination, and making it a large and complex organization is of limited (if not negative) value. The huge budget increase does not seem warranted.

2. Vision is not a product of multiple "democratic" inputs from a variety of sources. Vision is an INDIVIDUAL product of the visionary. Support for it can, and should be gained from the majority, but vision must PRECEDE budget and growth projections. It is not achieved by asking for ideas or telephone consultations with committees that are geographically spread over the country.

3. Hiring a professional fund raiser at this stage is unnecessary. The CUC should be funded primarily by the contribution of the member congregations based on their membership.

4. Support from donors is not likely when the spending is excessive and the need is left unstated.

5. I recommend that you analyze first what the function of the CUC is; how can member congregations be serviced or assisted (our view is that of course new congregations need seed money; some assistance with the FIRST hiring of a minister may be helpful; and contact with identified Unitarians who are not members of a congregation is useful; assistance with conflict resolution where there is conflict is OK, but this is relatively rare; Congregations should be invited to organize regional inter-congregational gatherings, but this should be left to the host congregations, and as far as I can see, OTHER SERVICES ARE NOT NEEDED).

6. Keep the budget within the revenue generated, and do NOT draw from the reserve, except in an unforeseen EMERGENCY.

Sincerely,

John R. Mayer, President,
Unitarian Congregation of Niagara, St. Catharines

Congregation News

Membership News

1. Maya Hudson, a senior who lives in Welland is seeking a ride to and from our Unitarian Church on Sundays. If you can help, please phone her at [REDACTED].

2. The new Church Directory should be ready by the first part of May. Please pick yours up at the Church.

*Jim Glassford,
Membership Co-ordinator*

Upcoming Events:

Mark your calendars!

Salad day, our last before the summer break, will be on May 23rd, 2010. We encourage locally grown ingredients which may still be a bit of a challenge at this time of year but a trip to a farmer's market may stimulate some interesting, fresh, and new ideas for your donated toppings!

- Hilde

UCN Book Club

The Book Club will meet at the home of Andrea Gravelle, ([REDACTED]) at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 18th. We shall discuss:

"October"

by Richard B. Wright

Please call [REDACTED] if you are able to attend.

Seder

My – we just had a Seder meal for the congregation. Not the first, but the first one attempted in many years. It seems to have been a great success. Many thanks to all who helped prepare food & wine, especially Joan Rothman, Andrea Gravelle, Barbara Bennett, Rhonda Armstrong, Kevin Jacobi, and all the others who brought special dishes - also thanks to Darcy Ewanchuk who made sure we had a lovely Haggadah booklet and to Roy and my family. Without all their contributions it would have been impossible. Last, but not least – it was great to share this celebration with an enthusiastic congregation.

- Penny Blake



Reflections on the Seder

- Ed Gilbert

When I arrived at the church, Friday night April 9, I really had no idea what to expect, as it was the first Seder I had ever experienced. The place was so beautifully arranged I hardly recognized it. Penny, and her committee, had everything so well arranged that the church simply looked beautiful.

Food - food – food. I have never seen such a delicious looking and smelling assortment. Whoever prepared the various dishes certainly deserved a great big vote of thanks.

Then the formal part of the evening started. It was quite a moving experience for someone who had never been to a Seder before. The enthusiasm was palpable and quite wonderful to see and hear. There were several readings and Hebrew prayers. I didn't know how I would react to these but they seemed so very appropriate as we were led into a remembrance of the freedom the Jews had achieved.

Penny Blake and her committee certainly deserve a big vote of thanks for putting on such a wonderful and rewarding evening. Thank you Penny, et al 🌟

From the Board:

Ucn Board Meeting

Minutes of March 4, 2010

Present:

John Mayer, John Northover, Carl Beckett, Doreen Peever, Ed Gilbert, Marie Belliveau, Roy and Penny Blake

Old Business:

a) Pastoral Care chair:

- several people have declined. John Berry will sit on the committee but not chair it.

- Volunteers will be invited on Sunday

- Marie and Sarah visited Donna Lemon, who is improving.

b) Concert: Doreen will talk to the musicians about a date, tickets, posters. We can seat approx. 80. Tickets will be \$25. Penny mentioned her chorale group as an alternative. Paul van Dongen's group was mentioned. Proposals for next board meeting for sequels.

c) Paperless Sunday reconsidered: M/S/C Doreen/Roy that 30 copies of the order of service be printed unless the service leader indicates otherwise to Darcy. Paper will be the default position.

d) Roof: Good for 10 years. The roof was replaced in 2004 with 20-yr. guarantee.

Treasurer's Report: M/S/C Carl/Roy. Carl will have another budget for the next meeting with 11% of the collection income directed to Social Action.

New Business:

a) Unicamp has sent vouchers for 2 free nights and 6 meals for 2 people. Carl will make an announcement at church and have a draw for anyone interested. Notice will be put in the April newsletter

b) CUC – AGM: Carl is our delegate.

Doreen will get a bowl from a potter friend to exchange with another congregation for the Empty Bowls dinner. Money will be collected to send with it for a charity chosen by the host church. An announcement will go in the April newsletter.

c) Music Conference in Madison, Wis.: It is the UU Musicians Network. Penny requested support for her attendance.

d) Mike has damp chaser for the piano and brought computer components (inline add-on for 100 extra sounds for digital piano. Roy will read the directions for installation. The piano will be tuned 2 weeks later. Penny will follow up on getting 4 keys for the grand piano so that only authorized people will play it.

e) Social Action:

- Pool ideas for spending budget

with the intention of making the UCN visible. John Mayer will get together with minister of Silver Spire United Church and Marie. Each board member is requested to bring ideas to the next meeting.

- Marie suggested \$2000 of the budget go to a special project and \$2000 to our regular causes.

f) Outside sign: Roy will change the message

Next Meeting: April 1, 2010 at 7 p.m.

Adjournment at 10 p.m.

Denominational Affairs

There will be leadership school held in Hamilton from July 13 - 17, 2010. More details and registration forms will be sent to our congregation at a later date.

The current issue of The World, publication of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) is on the table on the landing. Also on that table is information from the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC).

– *Merelie Scott-Armstrong*

Who Are We . . . (continued)

...The guardian recommended a change of custody. The fact I was an 'even more notorious lesbian', founder of a clinic for PWAs, president of the Pride Com and the Women's studies board at the Univ. were ruled irrelevant. At 14 she loved her school and friends, hated Alabama. She became bulimic. We got counselling, did a home schooling program. She prospered. She's now finishing a doctorate in biology. She could never decide what to be for Halloween and is debating her post doc.

My older daughter is a well-known restaurateur in San Francisco, doing very well. <zaziesf.com>. I told her a degree in English and religion

guaranteed a life in service, and it has. She writes a mean menu. It's a SF icon.

Why did I come to Canada, everyone asks; hell, why not? Remember the draft resisters? I'm a private medicine resister. I retired from private practice, paid the mortgage in a few shifts/mo in Emerg, but hated it. Found myself trying to cram primary care visits into Emerg visits, and wanting follow ups. I tried to emigrate about 8 yrs before I got here, but couldn't. I came in on a restricted license with the drug addicts and criminals. (Truthfully if you don't have a spotless record, don't bother). It cost \$10K.

I like it. Perhaps I could be happy anywhere. I like practicing medicine here. Ask me. And no, I'm not taking patients unless you are homeless, aboriginal, have multiple medical problems, mental health issues, or are GBLBTQ. Oh, and new Canadians. I take sick people who don't speak English. I may have done something awful in a past life. This is the practice I choose. The UU fellowship is my spiritual home. In June I'll be sober 35 years. My kids are fabulous. My curling is improving.

– *Barbara Bennett*

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Deadline for Next issue:
May 23, 2010