



UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF NIAGARA

A church for people
with enquiring minds

November 2007

Sunday Services

November 2007

- Nov 4** **Vivianne LaRiviere** – *Life's Journeys*
- Nov 11** **Dr. Leonard Rosmarin** –
*Re-inventing God in the Aftermath of
the Holocaust: Reflections on the
Work of Liliane Atlan*
- Nov 18** **Alexandra Fic** – *The Question of
Human Rights and Women in
Southeast Asia: the context in
Christian, Muslim, Buddhist and
Socialist countries*
- Nov 25** **Burt Peeters** – *Yoga and Meditation:
An Ancient Philosophy for Modern
Times*

December 2007

- Dec 2** **Felicia Urbanski** – *What Does It
Mean To Have Faith?*
- Dec 9** **Vivianne LaRiviere** – *Hymn Sing*
- Dec 16** **Susan Buckingham** – *A Baha'i
Approach to Conflict Resolution*
- Dec 23** **Jim Glassford** – *Christmas: The Story
of the Human Family*
- Dec 30** **Julianne Momirov** – *New Year's
Resolutions*

Let the Welcoming process begin!

Earlier this year, the Unitarian Congregation of Niagara agreed overwhelmingly to begin the Welcoming Congregation process.

The Welcoming Congregation process formalizes and recognizes a Unitarian congregation's contribution and commitment to advancing, supporting and promoting the issues and individuals of the gender- and sexual-diverse community. Even though most of us consider ourselves welcoming, we must recognize that we are also part of a culture in which much prejudice still exists and where the sexual- and gender-diverse community is actively targeted, often by other churches. When we fly our rainbow flag, there will be expectations in the Pride community that we are indeed a safe space and that the people inside our walls are aware of the issues and are truly welcoming.

Obviously we will want as many individuals as possible to attend these sessions.

The workshops are two hours with conversations and group activities in a non-judgmental and non-threatening environment that will lead us to personal and collective growth. The team of volunteer facilitators has almost completed reading the 150-page handbook.

We will hold eight or nine workshops after church services to reduce weeknight meetings, with three scheduled before Christmas. Facilitators had also discussed holding these workshops before church, starting at 8:30 a.m., and I (Joan Wiley) would be interested in knowing if we have a significant number interested in attending at that time. The first workshop will be held on Sunday, Nov. 18. Future dates will be announced shortly.



**Unitarian Congregation
of Niagara**
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2007/2008

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SOCIAL: Joan Rothman

WEBSITE: Phil Curtis
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Pamela Spear-Wilson

TRUSTEES:
Andrea Gravelle
Don Herne
James Wilson

RENTAL : John Northover

PASTORAL CARE:
Jenny Leach

Let the Welcoming process begin! *(cont'd from pg. 1)*

The first workshop on Nov. 18 is a basic introduction to the issues. Over the course of several months, we will also explore the following :

- what we know and how we learned it;
- the common elements of oppression;
- gender socialization and homophobia;
- religion and homosexuality;
- experiences of bisexual, gay, lesbian and/or transgender people;
- transgender identity and what it means;
- how homophobia hurts us all;
- and what now.

Once the workshops are complete, the church is then required to create a resolution about becoming a welcoming congregation and vote on it.

The workshops will move our church from the “auditing the program” stage to “earning the degree” status, and where we can put a capital W and C on Welcoming Congregation. It would also mean we would join the 98 per cent of other Canadian Unitarian congregations that have completed, or in process of completing, this program.

Now the real work as a congregation begins, and we're up to it.

Pledge Dinner Celebration

**Friday, November 16th
5:00 p.m. - 8ish**

Good Fellowship!
Good Food!
Good Music!

Sign up sheet is on the board at the back of the church. Please let me know if you are attending by Nov. 4th if possible. Firm numbers are needed for catering.

Yours in Fellowship

Joan Rothman (Social Convener)

Fair Trade Products!!

Fair trade coffee, tea, spices and chocolate will be available for sale on November 18.

– Pamela Spear-Wilson



Membership News

Workshop.....

I did a workshop last spring on "Planning Your Own Memorial Service" which was attended by 17 people. There was a whole package of useful resource material presented to every attendee, along with an envelope with your name on it to hold your ideas on YOUR Memorial Service, which would be kept in the office until needed. So far, I have received only one envelope back, and that was from my co-lay chaplain, John Mayer, who is already one of the "converted". It was a lot of work preparing that workshop. Please do your part in return, your homework.

– Doreen M. Peever

All Things Bright and Beautiful

Our 2nd annual "All Things Bright And Beautiful" craft show was held last Saturday, October 13th. Nine colleagues of mine from the St. Catharines Craft Guild participated, as well as three crafters from our church (I have a foot in both those camps) and two outside crafters. The church made \$404.00, composed of 25% of each crafter's sales, bake table contributions and door receipts. Thank you to the people who helped: Jim and Marg Glassford, Penny and Roy Blake, John Inglis, Lorraine Westhouse, Sarah Nyman, Joan Rothman, Andrea Gravelle, Jenny Leach, Doug Gibbs, Marie Belliveau, Jon Stahl, Hilde & Al Wheeler, Rhonda Armstrong and Tara Dajka. Some of you baked, some of you did the set up and clearing up, some of you managed the bake table, staffed the door, ran errands or relieved crafters. And very importantly, some

of you bought the beautiful crafts. We just wish you had brought more of your friends! Part of the poor attendance was probably due to the road construction which made getting into the parking lot a challenge. The weather was reasonably good. Julianne and I did our best with publicity. The crafts were of excellent quality and well-displayed. We wish we knew why more people didn't support this church fund raiser. If there is a 3rd annual show, we would appreciate suggestions on how to increase the attendance. One crafter suggested it be held in May, before Mother's Day, rather than the fall.

Any other ideas?

One of the crafters who participated in the show was John Carter, the metal sculptor who created our spectacular new chalice. Also participating was Eileen Petrie who helped to make the blown glass lamp that sits in the metal part of the chalice. Sofia interviewed John for an article in the newsletter.

Alphabet
Unitarian Church
November Newsletter



Pride, not prejudice

Persons unfamiliar with the Pride community will often scratch their heads when encountering this bewildering string of letters. The acronym becomes even more confusing when letters are switched — GLBTQ or BGLTQ — or when letters are added, such as in LGBTTQQ2SIP and sometimes an A.

We must remember that these letters are reducing persons' sacred lives to a letter of the alphabet, and

reflect only a part of their lives. And the danger with any label, of course, is that the labelled group becomes "the other" and not included as part of "the we".

The other barrier, of course, is that these boxes do not recognize the continuum and fluidity of human sexuality and gender, and that there are individuals who may identify with one or more of these categories and perhaps at different times in their lives. As well, people within a certain group may have life experiences and journeys very different from one another.

All that being said, this is what those letters mean:

L is for lesbian, a woman whose primary sexual, emotional, spiritual and intellectual attraction is to another women.

G stands for gay, a person (usually applied to men but may be used to encompass women) whose primary sexual, emotional, spiritual and intellectual attraction is to a person of the same sex.

B is for bisexual, a person who is sexually, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually attracted to both men and women though not necessarily at the same time or in the same way.

T represents transgender, an umbrella term to include all people who cross gender lines.

T also stands for transsexual, a person assigned by anatomical structure of the body to one sex but who internally identifies and wishes to function as a member of the opposite sex. Some, not all, seek hormone treatments or sex reassignment surgery to change their bodies so they are more in keeping

with their internal identity. The sexual orientation for transsexual individuals can be heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual or any other way a human being can express desire for another.

Q stands for queer, originally a derogatory label used to refer to lesbian and gay people or to intimidate and offend heterosexuals. More recently, this term has been reclaimed by some lesbians, gay men, bisexual people, and transgender people as an inclusive and positive way to identify all people targeted by heterosexism and homophobia.

Q also represents questioning, because individuals may question many aspects of their life, including their sexuality and gender.

I stands for intersex (or intersexual): Persons born with the full or partial sex organs of male and female, or with underdeveloped or ambiguous sex organs. (This word replaces the politically incorrect hermaphrodite.)

2S or TS means two-spirited, a term used by members of First Nations and Aboriginal communities which can mean either or both a) a person who has same-sex attractions or b) a person who identifies as being either of mixed gender or as a gender that differs from their biological sex.

P represents pansexual, a RLINK"http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_orientation"sexual orientation characterized by the potential for aesthetic attraction, romantic love and/or sexual desire for people regardless of their gender identity or biological sex.

A stands for asexual, a term used for someone who has no sexual desire.

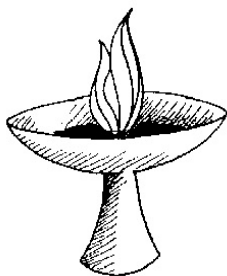


November Update

Another successful Unicamp summer has ended, and we are asking for your program ideas and suggestions for the 2008-2009 season. Please send them to scumbost@uoguelph.ca. We remind you that our site is available for rentals between mid-May & July 1st (it's perfect for Weddings!), please book in advance, so that we can ensure you get *your* dates!

Your new Board of Directors is Elinor Knight (President), Ellen Papenburg (VP & Treasurer), Simone Tishaw-Baril (Secretary), Patricia Trudeau (Program), Shawn Springer (Property), Shalom Cumbo-Steinmetz (Publicity), David Renzetti (Long Range Planning), Maggie Kambanis (Seasonals), Kendrew Pape (member at large), and Adrian Iacovino (Youth).

Here is an update on our Green Sanctuary efforts. Fridges in cottages have been replaced with more energy efficient bar-fridges, solar powered lighting has been added outside of dorms, peat is being used in our outhouses, and solar panels are pre-heating water for showers! Also, look for our new conservation awareness display, featuring an exhibit on the flora & fauna at Unicamp.



Wishing everyone the warmest of regards, as we head into the chilly part of this year!

Shalom Cumbo-Steinmetz
Publicity & Communications
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Calling All Walkers . . .

The next date for our 'Walks and Talks' outing will be Saturday November 17th in the afternoon. The location is open for discussion - perhaps a tour of Port Dalhousie followed by a hot drink somewhere. To express an interest, email Valerie at mpetrocci@sympatico.ca.

See you on the trail!



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