



## UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF NIAGARA

A church for people  
with enquiring minds

### March 2008

#### Sunday Services

##### March 2008

- Mar 2 Vivianne LaRiviere** – *Topic TBA*  
S.L. – John Mayer
- Mar 9 Harry Hunt** – *Childhood Spirituality* S.L. – Jenny Leach
- Mar 16 Al Wheeler** – *Wanderlust: A Curse or a Blessing?* S.L. – Jim Glassford
- Mar 23 Julianne Momirov** – *Flower Communion*
- Mar 30 Valerie Jaeger** – *Manners: Social Fluff or Expression of Unitarian Principle?*

##### April 2008

- Apr 6 Jim Glassford** – *Searching for the Great Truths*
- Apr 13 Vivianne LaRiviere** – *Topic TBA*  
S.L. – John Mayer
- Apr 20 Frank Fohr** – *Canadian Mining Companies in the Third World*  
S.L. – M. Belliveau
- Apr 27 Fiona McMurrin and Marie Belliveau** – *SPP and TILMA*  
S.L. – M. Belliveau

##### May 2008

- May 4 Celebration of Retirement Service of John Mayer and Doreen Peever from Lay Chaplaincy**
- May 11 Felicia Urbanski** – *What Does It Mean To Have Faith?* S.L. – J. Mayer
- May 18 Brock Shaver** – *Was Jesus Gay?*  
S.L. –
- May 25 Vivianne LaRiviere** – *Topic TBA*  
S.L. –

##### June 2008

- June 1 Michael Battenburg** – *Label Me, Lose Me (Label Myself, Lose Myself)*  
S.L. – Pam Spear Wilson & Will Wilson

#### James David Matthews

(Age 88, Born September 19, 1919)

James passed away peacefully at the Henley House, St. Catharines on Friday, February 15, 2008.

James, fondly known as Jim, was born in the UK, on the Isle of Wight. He was the second child in a family of two girls and two boys. He grew up in London and later, in World War II, served in the British army. It was during World War II, on a posting to Manitoba, Canada, that he met his wife Lynne (Doolan) Matthews (deceased February 05). At the end of the war Lynne joined Jim in the UK where they were married and had two sons.

Later Jim and Lynne moved to Canada and eventually made their home in St. Catharines. Jim was a high school teacher where his classes included Physical Education and Art History. Jim taught at Merritton High School and Governor Simcoe Secondary School in St. Catharines.

Jim enjoyed a long retirement where he actively pursued his love of travel, philosophy, photography and the arts in general. He was also very enthusiastic about his involvement with the Unitarian Church.

Jim leaves behind a sister Joyce Morris (Ted Morris) of the UK, sons Vaughan (Jessica Hepper) of British Columbia and Brett (Margaret Hazlewood) of Toronto, nieces and nephews in the UK, and many dear friends.

A service in celebration of Jim's life will be held on Sunday, March 16, 2008, at 2.00 p.m., at the Unitarian Congregation of Niagara.

Unitarian Congregation of Niagara  
www.unitarian-stcatharines.org



**Unitarian Congregation  
of Niagara**  
223 Church St.  
St. Catharines, ON L2R 3E8  
Tel: 905-687-8433  
[www.unitarian-stcatharines.org](http://www.unitarian-stcatharines.org)

**2008/2009**

**PRESIDENT: Michael Petrocci**

**VICE PRESIDENT:  
Jon Stahl**

**PAST PRESIDENT:  
Fred Bolton**

**LAY CHAPLAINS:  
J. Mayer & D. M. Peever,  
V. Jaeger & J. Momirov  
(In training)**

**SECRETARY:  
Anita Miecznikowski**

**TREASURER: Carl Beckett**

**MEMBER AT LARGE:  
Sarah Nyman**

**PROGRAM:  
Julianne Momirov**

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:  
Tara Dajka**

**MEMBERSHIP:  
Jim Glassford**

**PROPERTY:  
Peter Skelton**

**DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS:  
Roy Blake**

**NEWSLETTER:  
Sofia Vuorinen**

**COMMUNICATION:  
Luke Kwiatkowski**

**SOCIAL JUSTICE:  
Adolf Miecznikowski**

**SOCIAL: Hilde Wheeler**

**EVENTS: Penny Blake**

**WEBSITE: Bruce Millar**

**LAY CHAPLAINCY:  
Pamela Spear-Wilson**

**TRUSTEES:  
Andrea Gravelle, Don Herne  
James Wilson**

**RENTAL : John Northover**

**PASTORAL CARE:  
Jenny Leach & John Berry**

**PHONE: John Inglis**

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## ***Come All!***

**Lift Your Voices; No Matter how small or LARGE they might be!**  
We are planning a meeting to form a Singing Group! We want everyone and anyone who enjoys singing!

Not quite a choir (yet anyhow) but a group of us that just enjoy singing, no matter how awful you may think you sound! If you enjoy raising your voice to music then come on out.

Our plan so far is to just to get together (bi-weekly/monthly?) and sing the songs we like. We will not perform unless we feel comfortable doing so and that may be never but that's not our priority right now. We just want to bring music to our building, our lives and our hearts!

The meeting will be held the March 9th at 12:30 right after the service. We will discuss days, times and format, so it should not take too long.

Please talk to Barbara Worthy, Tara Dajka, Penny Blake or Marie Belliveau if you are interested or just slightly curious!

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### Fair Trade Products for Sale

On **March 30<sup>th</sup>** fair trade coffee, tea and chocolate will be available for purchase. The product comes from the Niagara-on-the-Lake store called Ten Thousand Villages.

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## **A Basics Weekend**

Our congregation will be hosting the CUC Designing and Leading Rites of Passage Weekend from April 18-20 at our church. We call the weekend- the "Basics" because it is the recommended basic training program for new and prospective Lay Chaplains. Our lay chaplains in training, Valerie Jaeger and Julianne Momirov will be attending from our congregation as well as Ed Gilbert. If you are interested in attending please call Pamela Wilson at 468-0808.

The Basics weekend will require our very wonderful church volunteers for everything from billeting lay chaplains to preparing and serving meals throughout the weekend.

I will be phoning all of you to ask for assistance and I know that you will all be able to contribute something even a couple of hours to this endeavor.

This church has always had very energetic volunteers which has always made me very proud to be part of such an organization. Let's show the Canadian Unitarian Council what we can do!

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## Membership News

1. Please take the following names off your Directory as they have resigned from the Congregation:

Betty Kossivas and James Mazeau

2. Please change the email addresses for Pam and Wil Wilson:

Pam's is: p.w\_123@yahoo.ca

Wil's is:

glenstonecottage@yahoo.com

3. If any of your information listed in the Directory needs to be changed, please inform me as soon as possible.

*Jim Glassford, Membership*

## **Welcoming status endorsed**

By Joan Wiley

The Unitarian Congregation of Niagara is one giant step closer to officially becoming a Welcoming Congregation.

On Feb. 17, 2008 at the AGM, the members of the congregation unanimously endorsed the following resolution:

"Given that the Unitarian Congregation of Niagara has successfully completed the Welcoming Congregation program, be it resolved that the Congregation affirms to welcome and celebrate the membership and participation of members of the gender- and/or sexual-diverse community. Furthermore, be it resolved that the Unitarian Congregation of Niagara request certification as a Welcoming Congregation from the Canadian Unitarian Council."

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 also 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.

To celebrate our new status, there is discussion about holding a special event at the church in May to officially raise the rainbow flag, a colourful and powerful symbol of the Pride community.

The interactive two-hour workshops, which began in November 2007, were extremely well attended, and participants gained many insights. The final session, "What now?", garnered thoughtful and creative suggestions as to how we as individuals, as a church, and in the broader community, can reach out to members of the gender-and sexual-diverse community.

Members of the congregation also endorsed a motion to create a task force to review and recommend changes to the language of present bylaws so that they better acknowledge, reflect, respect and celebrate the diversity of congregants and the broader society who are members of the gender and sexual continuum; and to add a non-discrimination welcoming clause to the bylaws.

Our congregation joins the more than 90 per cent of Unitarian churches in Canada that have completed the Welcoming Congregation program.

## **What is Change?**

As I simmer the many questions of what I look for in a congregation and where this congregation may be heading, I wonder what changes do lay ahead. Will the congregation, individually and collectively, embrace change or will it resist? What changes are truly in the best interests of the congregation and for the greatest good of all? How will those changes happen; how quickly or slowly do they need to happen? And, importantly, what is the ultimate goal of those changes? For that matter, what are the goals of this congregation and is there a mission statement or some such concrete identification of such? Following the Principles is one thing but enacting them is an important other! (The Welcoming Congregation process and flying the rainbow flag is a great example of enacting them! - I'm not suggesting there is no current action, I simply want to raise questions on my mind and share my thoughts.) Ultimately, what purpose does this congregation wish to serve and how can we best serve it – what actions serve that purpose?

While it is ideal to take into account everyone and their individual preferences and needs ... is this an attainable reality? Whose needs get prioritized? How do we please everyone? Can we please everyone, and if not then how do we choose who to please? And then what about those who get left out? For example, do we serve the needs of the current congregation or do we strive to grow and serve the potential needs of expanding the congregation, so that it can live on? Can we do both? And how?

The Principles that UUs strive to uphold are admirable and ones that

I, personally, have endeavored to espouse throughout a lot of my life. As I have grown, so has my understanding and it will continue to do so as I continue to grow. My ability to interact with ideas has expanded and encompasses more than ever before. There have been many sour, bitter, and even foul places along the way but they all served to challenge me to become who I am ... and to better myself (namely, to increase my capacity to be a more and more loving force in this world). Is it time for some discomfort of growing pains, to stir the pot so that this congregation can nourish itself and forge ahead?

It sounds like it, from the bits and pieces I've heard speaking to some concerns of the congregation. One concern I have noticed is whether the toes of those who have been here and already serving the congregation in various ways will be stepped upon. No one wants to disrespect anyone else. I think everyone is just passionate, in their unique ways, about what they want to see for this congregation and for themselves.

This leads me to farther inquire: How much do the individuals' concerns come before or after the congregation's? If everyone were able to set aside their personal feelings, agendas, etc ... what would be their common goal and would there be less focus on people maybe getting themselves upset? It is a choice, you know. At any point we each have a choice ... 'am I gonna flow with this or am I gonna resist it?' I find this choice applies to everything. So, can those who want change flow with the drag of the effect that those who resist it have? And can those who want to maintain tradition flow with the shifts of the effect that those who resist it have?

All of these questions and concerns have taken on an extra meaning to me, recently, as I have joined the RE Committee. In thinking about how to serve the congregation in this manner, all the above comes into mind.

It seems to me that maybe a place to start resolving or answering the concerns and questions is in extra communication. Each and every voice of this congregation is important and should get its say. Even if it is simply for the purpose of venting ... we can honour that everyone is entitled to their own perceptions and experiences! When we have a place to voice and speak our truths, without repercussions of judgment and condemnation, I think we facilitate progress and practice of the principles. Is there a way of doing this? Is there or could there be a way for everyone to share what is on their minds – other than this newsletter, since some people may prefer to express themselves anonymously or otherwise? Maybe, for example, a “Communication Box” that people could inconspicuously slip papers into, on which they have expressed whatever is on their minds? (Then, who would read them? And how would they be shared – maybe a special section in the newsletter? Or what?) I would love to hear options put out there and invite you to share your ideas!

Maybe another option for aiming toward resolution of the concerns and questions might be to find a really clear and concrete collective voice. While UUs support individuals, can this be a “congregation” if we are simply a bunch of individuals, maybe even working at cross-purposes? Would people be more likely to generously contribute their time if there weren't the potential pressure of such concerns already mentioned

(and others not mentioned) and if they had clarity of collective aspirations?

I hope this is food for thought. And that maybe even some delectable dishes can come from it!

Respectfully,

*Tara Kriyachanda-Dajka*

## Enrichment Feedback

Hi all! I've asked to be included here a feedback form about adult enrichment programs. I realize that this is something you have done before, not too long ago. I hope that you will be so kind as to fill out this further one, as I would like to get a sense of if what you would like has changed in the meantime and also a sense of if you are interested in some additional ideas to possibly be offered. I'd like to check in regularly with you all, to do my best to learn about if the preferences of the congregation are being met, in terms of the offerings of the RE programs. Please don't hesitate to contact me with requests or questions ... I am very open to feedback, discussion and options!

Thanks.

Respectfully yours in service,  
*Tara Dajka*







## You are invited to come to Ottawa!

On behalf of the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa, I am pleased to invite you to the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) 2008 Annual Conference and Meeting (ACM) "The Web of Life – In our Hands" on May 16 - 19th, 2008.

Please mark these dates in your calendar today. You won't want to miss this annual three day conference which brings together Unitarians and Universalists from across the country for fun, learning, worship and song.

Engaging lectures and workshops on peace, justice, the environment, building strong congregations, and other issues will be presented as well as interesting and inspiring programming for children, young adults and youth. For more information visit <http://cuc.ca/conference/2008/>

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## BIOGRAPHY:

### KATE GREEN

Kate Green joined USC Canada in October 1993 as a Program Officer. Since that time, she has helped guide both USC's Bangladesh program – including the highly successful Adolescent Development Program – and the Nepal program. Most recently, she has joined the team which steers Seeds of Survival™, USC's flagship food security program.

Seeds of Survival™ (SoS) is an award-winning international agriculture program that seeks to

ensure a secure source of food and livelihood for small-scale farmers and promote crop diversity. Working closely with the world's poorest farms, SoS is making food and seed supplies more secure.

Kate is part of a team that ensures sound, cost-effective development programming, working directly with farmers to promote community-based food security initiatives and undertake research. Kate is currently overseeing the work of projects in Southern India.

In addition, Kate guides the work which connects people across Canada with the programs and people of USC Canada. In this Public Engagement role, she seeks out opportunities to meet constituency groups which have an interest in food security, community development and policy advocacy in Canada. She manages a strong program of public events supported by USC staff, Board members and volunteers. She regularly speaks and leads workshops at Unitarian congregations, sustainable agriculture events such as Seedy Saturdays, and other related conferences or meetings.

Kate holds a degree from Queen's University and a M.A. in Rural Development from the University of East Anglia, Norwich, England. As part of her in-field study, Kate spent six months living in a remote coastal community in southwestern Bangladesh. She has traveled regularly to South Asia, and Ethiopia.

Kate lives in Ottawa with her husband and two daughters.



## March Update

Located within the UNESCO Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve, Unicamp boasts 50 beautiful, peaceful acres of meadows, coniferous and deciduous forests, marshes, streams, caves and two beaches on a 5 acre spring-fed pond. Campsites, dorms and cottages are all lodging options; with meals served daily at the Dining Hall.

This month's featured program is *Family Camp*. Join us for a week of out-doors fun and relaxation with your family. Separate programming offered for children and adults in the mornings, and combined family activities such as soccer, capture the flag, and camp circle in the afternoons. Join other families for a week of enjoyment in this relaxing, welcoming and open environment!

Parents: Register your child for Kids' Camp by March 15th and receive a 10% discount.

Aspiring Staff: Want to work at camp this summer? Don't wait, apply online at [unicampofontario.ca](http://unicampofontario.ca)

To register look for the pink newsletter, which should be available at your congregation, or contact:

[unicampofontario@hotmail.com](mailto:unicampofontario@hotmail.com);  
41 Home Street, Guelph, Ontario,  
N1H 2E4, (519) 822-6353.



## The Donkey in the Well

A farmer's donkey fell down a wide, unused well. The animal hee-hawed pitiously. The farmer tried desperately to lift the heavy donkey out of the well, but all his efforts failed. With great sadness, the farmer decided that because the donkey was old, that it should stay in the well, and his neighbours would fill in the dangerous well with dirt, as a burial site for his old friend.

So the local farmers came with their shovels, and started dumping dirt into the well. The donkey realized what was happening, and cried out horribly. Then to everyone's amazement the donkey became quiet.

A few shovelfuls later, the farmer looked down the well and was astonished at what he saw. As each shovelful of dirt fell on the donkey's back, the donkey did something amazing. It would shake off the dirt, trample it under hoof, and take a step upwards. The local farmers continued to throw dirt into the well, and the donkey was soon able to climb out of the well, and happily trotted off to the green pasture.

Moral: There may be times when each of us feels trapped, with the world dumping dirt on us. So if we can copy the smart donkey, and shake off the dirt that falls on us, little by little we overcome, and soon we are able to climb out of our well and once again enjoy a cheerful life.

Postscript: The donkey later came back and bit the farmer who had tried to bury him. The wound on the farmer's arm became infected and the farmer died from septic shock. He was buried in his own well.

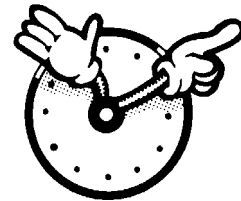
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### Our Mission Covenant Statement

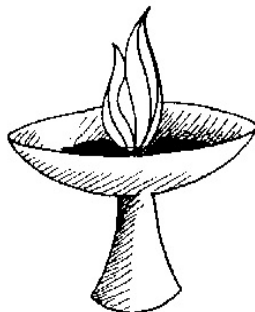
“We covenant to support an  
Empowering church that  
Affirms the individual and  
Celebrates history, science and  
Mystery in a welcoming, joyous  
And evolving fellowship.”

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**March 9<sup>th</sup>**

Daylight Savings Time beings.



#### **Unitarian Congregation of Niagara**

223 Church St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 3E8

Tel: 905-687-8433 [www.unitarian-stcatharines.org](http://www.unitarian-stcatharines.org)

**Editor:** Sofia Vuorinen

905-563-8615

[sofia.vuorinen@3web.net](mailto:sofia.vuorinen@3web.net)

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**March 23, 2008**