

# Unitarian Fellowship of Kelowna



# SIGNAL

January 2008 Newsletter

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## UPCOMING SERVICES:

January 6th **"Let It Be A Dance"** a lay service led by Kelly Hamilton and Mary Lou Johnson.

*The New Year begins with a Circle of Dancers presenting a service based on how spirituality and dance intermingle. We welcome presentations by Simonne Macklem, Gail Hodgson, Sharon Sebo, and Hajime Naka. Gail will also be speaking for the Caia Connection as our monthly Designated Giving recipient. This is a local organization that supports HIV/AIDS orphans in Caia, Mozambique. Please stay afterwards to enjoy Community Lunch Sunday.*

January 13th **"Right Speech: A Spiritual Practice?"** Rev. Linda Weaver Horton

*One of the steps on the Buddhist eight-fold path is called "right speech." For outspoken Unitarians, what might "right speech" as a spiritual practice look like? One thing we know -- it isn't simple -- and doesn't always come naturally!*

January 20th **"The Mystery of Mathematics"** Wayne Broughton

*In my opinion the contemplation and study of mathematics can sometimes be considered a form of spiritual practice, or at least meditative discipline. I will try to give a glimpse of the vast and awe-inspiring abstract world being explored by mathematicians, and ponder the real wonder and mystery of how this world is so intimately connected with the physical world we live in. No math degrees are necessary, and there won't be a pop quiz afterwards, but there might be some bad math jokes.*

January 27th Celebrating the Jewish **"New Year of the Trees"** Rev. Linda Weaver Horton

*Can trees be guides for living more harmoniously through the seasons of our own lives? As we share a "communion" of different symbolic fruits of the earth eaten for millenia in wintertime, we are invited to reflect together about our own responses to the ever changing nature of our lives.*

## MINISTER'S MUSINGS:

Wishes for the New Year

I offer you a New Year's blessing written by my professional mentors, the Revs. Tom and Carolyn Owen-Towle from San Diego (where I will be when you read this):

*"We wish for you patience, yet capacity for adventure;*

*We wish for you challenge that stretches without breaking you;*

*We wish for you sensitivity in your relationships, knowing when to wrangle, bridge, and step aside;*

*We wish for you openness to the wonders and hurts of keen living;*

*We wish for you touch, that your bodies and minds stay in ongoing closeness with what and who matters;*

*We wish for you freshness, that each pleasure be savoured, each decision be pondered and each trouble faced;*

*We wish for you perspective, that petty irritations not wear you down, that transient enthusiasms not detour you, that unfortunate events not crush you -- for religious living is the art of maintaining balance in a universe fraught with paradoxes;*

*We wish for you humour, that you may laugh regularly and heartily at your own foibles and life's flaws;*

*We wish for you affection, given and received in the details of daily existence;  
We wish for you courage, to make some of the ugly moments beautiful and the tragic times precious -- and when meaning is not to be made or found, the energy to move on.  
We wish for you a sense of kinship with a universe not of your making, yet related to your deepest core, a cosmos from which you may generate beliefs to sustain, values to guide, and mysteries to inspire;  
We wish for you a long growing in love with your irrepeatable life, a life that invites all the ardor, bravery, forgiveness and hope you can muster.”*

May our beloved community, and each of us, live these gifts in 2008!

In Faith,  
Linda

## **RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION AND INTERGENERATIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

Notes from Rev. Linda

We will be doing Secret Pals again, starting in mid-January, so be on the lookout for a signup sheet! Lois and I and the RE Advisory Committee hope many of you will join us in building intergenerational friendships over the next two months. The first Sunday in March will be the day we find out who our secret pal is this year.

Our Groovin' Green and Yogi Yellow groups have shifted their focus from world religions and holidays (though there are a few "holy days" we will be celebrating). January until Easter, the focus will be upon U\*U Principles for the Greens, and related values (such as cooperation and celebrating people of many colours) for the Yellows. We are still looking for some additional help with both groups.

Sunday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, the children will help serve a Tu Bish'vat "communion" -- Jewish New Year for the Trees, involving dried fruits and nuts. We will of course avoid peanuts, but if there are any other nut allergies we should know about, please let Lois or me know.

A warm thank you to everyone who helped make our Gift-making workshop and Christmas pageant both fun and meaningful! Over 40 people participated in making 100+ gifts, and the Pageant involved about 30 people of all ages. Fourteen people went carolling to the homes of several of our Elders. Only one child, though -- we hope for more next year. It can be a very meaningful experience for them.

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:**

January again and the wheel of the year has circled around to another opportunity to begin. These opportunities to begin again are continually coming around ~ September, Samhain, Solstice ~ and now a new year.

As I look back, the highlight of December for me was the ceremony in which we honoured eight of the elders of our faith our elders ~ Mary Barton, Denise Brownlie, Rob Brownlie, Ann Dearle, Jean Dell, Helen Holyk, Gerda Rothe, Mari McIntosh. I have so many memories of these people; memories of work and socializing ~ committee meetings and fundraising and long chats. All of the knowledge and talent and skill they brought and bring to our congregation is very precious and I'm happy we're learning how to recognize these contributions.

Looking forward, we have many plans for the New Year, some long range, some more immediate and practical. We will establish a long range planning committee to focus on our building needs. Work has begun in this regard, some research and information gathering is underway. At some point we will need to make decisions about renovating, or selling, or moving, or building ~ all possibilities with pros and cons. There will be lots of opportunity to talk and work.

The Green Sanctuary committee has already been meeting and organizing and planning. This too is an interesting, engaging opportunity to talk and learn and also to practice care of the Earth and each other. Be sure to read Gwen Steele's article in this newsletter.

Another new possibility is the Unitarian Philosopher's Café idea that is brewing. We hope to develop a discussion forum presenting topics which exemplify our Principles. This will be both for our own interest and as an outreach program. Talk to Linda or me if you have an interest in this.

We have a new Chaplaincy Committee to support the work that our lay chaplain does. Lay chaplains provide rites of passage for both church members and the broader community. They provide beautiful, sensitive, personal ceremonies for weddings, child dedications, and memorial services. The opportunity to be a chaplain is in itself an amazing life experience. Talk to Lindsay Atkinson-Smith or Barb Bowmar if you would like to hear more about this work.

On the more prosaic side, we will have new carpet in the foyer, new paint in the Children's RE room, and a new sign with a rainbow triangle designating our Welcoming Congregation status. David Hughes is working on a hearing loop that is wired into the floor and miraculously (that's my word because I don't quite actually understand this) improves sound for folks with hearing problems. Ask David for details.

Also in the New Year is our Annual General Meeting where we will elect a new Board, and a new president. I have appreciated my experience in this role; it has been engaging and illuminating. I have seen my church from a very different perspective and my commitment and appreciation have deepened. At the same time I am looking forward quite enthusiastically to beginning a new term on the board as past president.

Happy New Year friends.  
May you begin again in love.  
Marilyn

### **CARE AND CONCERN UPDATE:**

A memorial service celebrating the life of Dave Bremner was held in the church on Sat. December 1. The Buddhist meditations and rituals blended well with the Unitarian prayers and songs. Dave died four months after his wife, Lois. Their life together was a long and remarkable partnership.

Our fellowship welcomes new born baby Cassius, son of Sheila Northcott and Daniel Merchant.

Life memberships are awarded to members of the Fellowship who have served and supported the Unitarian Church for many years. On Sunday December 2, Rev. Linda Weaver Horton conferred life memberships on seniors Mary Barton, Mari McIntosh, Rob Brownlie, Jean Dell, Helen Holyk and Ann Dearle. Denise Brownlie and Gerda Rothe were unable to attend and will be honoured at a future date.

Jessie Haynes

### **GREEN SANCTUARY UPDATE:**

We are beginning an exciting ~ three year process to become accredited by the Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth as a Green Sanctuary congregation. Some of you were in this congregation a few years ago when we went through a similar process to become a "Welcoming Congregation".

The vision of the Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth is **"a world in which all people make reverence, gratitude, and care for the living Earth central to their lives"**. The Green Sanctuary Program gives roots and wings to this vision. It invites congregations all over North America to embark on an exploration of what it means to live today within a religious community on an imperiled Earth. In doing so we will be learning how to truly live our Unitarian 7<sup>th</sup> principle which states that:

**We covenant to affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.**

The Green Sanctuary program invites congregations to:

- ❖ Build an awareness of the significance and complexity of environmental issues
- ❖ Encourage personal lifestyle changes
- ❖ Engage in community action on environmental issues
- ❖ Strengthen the connection between spiritual practice and Earth consciousness
- ❖ Work to heal environmental injustices

During the process for accreditation we are asked to do projects in specific areas in order to have a well balanced program. These are:

- ❖ Worship and spiritual practice
- ❖ Children's Religious Education and Adult Religious Education
- ❖ Environmental Justice
- ❖ Sustainable living

The Green Sanctuary Committee is nearing completion of an audit of our current practices and procedures, our grounds and our building to see how "green" we are right now and where we could make changes. This has given us some ideas for potential projects and is the first stage toward our application to become a candidate for Green Sanctuary accreditation.

On January 27<sup>th</sup> we will have an informal coffee hour information sharing session for anyone interested in hearing more about what Green Sanctuary is.

We plan to have a brainstorm session with the whole congregation after the worship service early in March to look at possible projects. To prepare for this, we invite all committees and everyone in the congregation to begin thinking of "green" projects they would like to suggest. Some examples are: to improve upon our recycling practices and start composting the kitchen waste, to hold a multigenerational Earth Day service and action, to have a workshop for the community on ethical investing, or to be part of an ongoing wetland clean-up through the Adopt a Stream program. Be creative. Remember you're a Unitarian and think outside the box!! Please forward your ideas to Simonne Macklem.(sagebush@telus.net)

To find out more about the Green Sanctuary program, visit the U.U. Ministry for Earth website [www.uuministryforearth.org](http://www.uuministryforearth.org). We now have their 27 page manual on CD and have five copies available if anyone wishes to download it into their own computer. Also, you can get a really good idea of what we could do by going to [www.cuc.ca](http://www.cuc.ca) then click on congregations and check out the Green Sanctuary program of the Calgary church. It gives a good perspective of possibilities.

The committee will meet Sunday, January 13<sup>th</sup> after the worship service. Bring your lunch. Anyone interested in being on the committee is welcome. Contact Simonne Macklem or Gwen Steele for further information.

The following is a quote from Reverend Jesch, Director of the U.U. Ministry for Earth:

*"The Green Sanctuary Program is not about taking green "steps" one at a time, it's a process aimed at changing the way you see your place as a faith community on this Earth. The "steps" or projects are just a tool for furthering that transformation. That should change the way you look at what you "count" as one of the 12 projects in your action plan. Your 12 projects won't solve the environmental crisis by themselves, but you will raise awareness and get members started on the path of living more lightly. At the same time, as a congregation you will be deepening your relationship with Earth and with each other, making your community stronger and more committed to healing a hurting world. That is why some of the projects are about religious education (not just environmental education), and why some are about worship and spiritual practice.*

*The environmental assessment clarifies your current status for the congregation in terms of awareness and practice. You will also look at your congregation's interests and inclinations in order to understand what it takes to get them motivated and excited about issues or programs. (This is unique to every congregation.) By shedding light on these two aspects of congregational*

*life -- current status and interests -- you can develop a comprehensive program of projects and programs that will move them to the next level - all in the context of the five goals of the Green Sanctuary Program. When you have this comprehensive understanding you can decide what projects to put in your action plan. The action plan starts where you're at now and moves forward from there. If this whole subject is new to the congregation, you may start with incorporating Earth references in one special service, but if you've already begun to recognize your relationship with Earth in your worship, you should ask yourselves what you might do next to move to another level. If you have already switched to ceramic coffee cups for coffee hour, what can you do to move to the next level in terms of waste management in the congregation? So you definitely want to look at where you're at now and what the ultimate goal is."*

Gwen Steele

### **FINANCIAL PLEDGE UPDATE:**

The Annual Pledge canvass is underway, and as of November 18. Approximately one third of the pledge cards have been signed and returned. The Finance Committee is very encouraged by the response we are receiving towards our goal of \$65,000.00

Many members and friends have chosen to increase their planned givings for 2008. If this pattern continues we will be well on our way to reaching our objective. A bi-product of reaching our financial objective will be our capacity to increase Religious Education in all sectors of the Fellowship.

If you have not completed your pledge as of this date, please give it your prayerful consideration and respond by December 2, 2007. The Finance Committee must have a fairly accurate indication of your anticipated contributions before presenting the 2008 Budget. Remember the tax implications and benefits. It really does feel good at year's end to get that tax deduction.

The Finance Committee

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

The **Simplicity Circle** will meet on Friday, January 11 at 5:30 in the church hall. Bring a simple dish of food to share, and come prepared to finalize the Green Sanctuary questionnaire that will be distributed to members of the fellowship.

contact: Judith Gunderson: 769-7459

You are invited to a **Baby Shower** for Cassius and his parents Sheila Northcott and Dan Marchant.! Sunday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2-4 PM. at the church. Gender and age inclusive celebration, sponsored by our Care and Concern Committee and hosted by several other parents. Gifts are optional (there will be a piggybank for Cassius you can contribute to), but if you wish to bring one, their first child was a girl, so beyond infant sizes they have few clothes for a boy. There will be a list of other needs in the office.

Considering Membership in this Congregation? Our next welcoming ceremony is scheduled for February 3<sup>rd</sup>. You might want to attend a "New U" Introductory session after church on January 20<sup>th</sup> (light lunch provided). Focus will be our diverse and eclectic theology. Or give Rev. Horton a call and schedule a personal conversation about membership. If you feel at home here and have been attending for a while, we look forward to welcoming you into our church "family!"

**A NIGHT OF FUN AND FELLOWSHIP FOR ALL.**

COME AND JOIN IN A NIGHT OF FUN. ACTIVITIES, LAUGHS AND FELLOWSHIP AIMED AT HELPING US ALL TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER BETTER.

SATURDAY FEB 2 IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL.

7.00 PM - 9.00 PM

FOR ALL AGES

\$5 PER PERSON CHILDREN UNDER 8 FREE.

THIS IS A " GOODS AND SERVICES FUND RAISING EVENT" FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SIGNED UP AND PAID, JUST PAY AT THE DOOR.

LEADERS: ROBIN JARMAN AND CATHRYN WELLNER

**Calling all Circle Dancers**

Unfortunately, the December evening of Circle Dance was cancelled due to illness. I hope all dancers will have saved up their enthusiasm for our next dance evening scheduled for Sunday, January 20/08, at Columbus Villa, 1920 Richter St. in the Knight's Room. New dancers are always welcome.

For more information call Simonne at 764-9539.

**Mindfulness Meditation Circle:** Mondays, 5:15-6:15 PM. co-facilitated by Rev. Linda and Lloyd Horton. Everyone welcome. Resumes on January 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Dates to Remember**

**January 7th** – Mindfulness Meditation resumes

**January 11th** – Simplicity Circle

**January 20th** – New \*U\* Introductory Class

**January 20th** – Circle Dancing

**January 27th** – Baby Shower

**February 2nd** – Fun Night

*The Unitarian Fellowship of Kelowna, is located at 1310 Bertram Street, Kelowna, BC V1Y 2E8.*

*Our telephone number is (250) 763-7212, and our email address is: [unitarian@silk.net](mailto:unitarian@silk.net).*

*For more information about our congregation please visit our website: [www.unitariancongregation.org/kelowna](http://www.unitariancongregation.org/kelowna).*

***Sunday Services begin at 10:30 am. Childcare and programs are available year round.***

*The Signal is distributed on the last Sunday of each month. Deadline for submissions is the Monday prior to distribution.*

*Please email submissions to: [ufksignal@hotmail.com](mailto:ufksignal@hotmail.com)*