

Unitarian Fellowship of Kelowna



SIGNAL

May 2008 Newsletter

UPCOMING SERVICES:

- May 4th - **“Spiritual Practice’ for U*Us – Our growing edge?”** -- Rev. Linda Weaver Horton
*Both words – “spiritual” and “practice” – can raise questions for some Unitarians. What does the increasing use of such language among us mean? Are there spiritual practices that come out of our own Tradition? Why are so many U*Us adopting practices from other traditions? Is there value in deepening the interior dimensions of our spiritual journeys? Our “Family” Choir will debut this Sunday. This is Community Sunday, so there will be a special collection for the Elizabeth Fry Society. Please plan to stay for lunch after the service. Over dessert downstairs there will be an Introductory session to Unitarianism and this church, facilitated by our minister. Please come if you want to know more, or are thinking about Membership in this congregation.*
- May 11th - **“An Ethical Will: What Legacy do we offer our Children?”** -- Rev. Linda Weaver Horton
This Mother’s Day, my youngest daughter is a new mother. The most important things we pass on from one generation to the next are values and dreams and the stories that reveal our deepest loyalties. What would we like the younger folk in our lives to “inherit” from us? How can we let them know what we cherish?
- May 18th - **“Turning Points”** Guest speaker: Jim Taylor -- Service coordinated by Marilyn Raymond
The subject matter derives somewhat from the studies of the McLuhans, Marshall and Eric, into how good intentions can go sour. Essentially, they found that almost anything, pushed to an extreme, tends to “flip” and have exactly the opposite effect from what was intended. The trouble is that no one ever knows, in advance, just where that “flip” will occur. That’s why it is only after the fact that we discover that we have become trapped in something sinful, to use some traditional language, or damaging, harmful, in more secular terms.
- May 25th - **“This Old Church”** -- Led by Rick Hardman
A major part of our spiritual journey is where we experience it. Our building is more than boards and plaster and cement. We’ll review it’s history, all that it gives us, and where we might be going with it.

MINISTER’S MUSINGS:

Our Gifts and the World’s Need

There is a saying that the best way to discern a vocation is to look at where our gifts intersect with the world’s need (or pain). What do we see when we look at our congregation this way? While there are many things we do, three places where our “gifts” meet the world’s need stand out for me.

1) We are uniquely “gifted” to wrestle with meaning in the context of our times -- to do the work of consciously examining, shaping and articulating values and vision for a future that must be radically different than the past. Our Green Sanctuary work is a true vocation in this sense. We do not promote a “new,” politically correct orthodoxy, but embrace the vocation of “holy heretics” -- those who consciously choose paths towards greater wholeness -- who practice the spiritual discipline of dialoguing with those who are different, not to convert

them, but to find a deeper wisdom together. We can build bridges between the meaning systems of the past and the challenges of our own time, offering a solid foundation for the future. Our world is crying out for hope - the gifts we bring offer hope that humanity can find its way towards a more ethically and ecologically sound future.

2) We are also a covenanted community-- covenanted to affirm and promote justice, equity and compassion in our relationships, and to respect the worth and dignity of every person. As such, we try to "be what we want to see." We are a laboratory, if you will, of a different way of being human together. As a freely chosen community of covenant, not of creed, we are learning more skilful, as well as more nurturing, ways to be together. This "gift" of our community was movingly apparent at our recent service reaffirming our Welcoming Congregation commitment to be inclusive of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. We take what we learn here out into the world, and help bring healing into places of pain and brokenness.

3) We are an intergenerational, value-based community of seekers. Here we can offer children an environment in which they can grow to be courageous, compassionate, visionary world citizens who will bring hope to a future that promises to be challenging. They have a place in which to be rooted that challenges the facile, competitive, consumption-oriented world view of our times, and builds bridges across the generations. Our recent intergenerational service on "Connecting with the Earth" lifted up this gift.

To do justice to such a calling, we need to grow -- in depth and compassion, in courage and creativity, in diversity of programming and breadth of service, as well as in numbers. That growth is happening, and we have affirmed our willingness to embrace it constructively. Long-time Members and newcomers, together we will be shaping how this congregation will live out its calling in the future.

This beloved community offers its gifts with a grace and gentleness, commitment and compassion that touch my heart deeply. It is inspiring to partner with you on this creative journey!

In Faith,
Rev. Linda

UFK BUILDING FUTURES:

TEAM UPDATE

At the direction of the UFK Board, our committee was formed in February '08 with a mandate to "...explore possible development options of our Bertram/Cawston properties that will reflect our Unitarian principles...with the goal of achieving the best possible future home for our congregation and helping to ensure the long range financial stability of the UFK."

As of the date of the newsletter, our committee will have met 4 times and we are proceeding with our investigations in a number of directions, building on the extensive work already done by the previous committee. In order to come to any conclusions and recommendations, we have been reviewing a broad range of ideas including input from our congregation both from the Building Futures survey and from individuals. In order to make informed recommendations, we are gathering information from many sources including the City of Kelowna, BC Housing, potential partners and more.

Our team consists of Louise McKenzie, Brij Mathur, John Palmer, Linda Horton, Maggie Nixon, Mari McIntosh, Gary Hamilton, Jamie Tanner, Robin Jarman, Barbara Bowmar and Dan Merchant. If you have any queries, please feel free to contact any of our team or come and join us for an information session we will be having on June 1 after our church service (details to be announced).

Gary Hamilton, Co-chair

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

In the past few years, Marilyn Raymond as President and supported by a terrific Board (many of whom are still working on your behalf) has created such an atmosphere of achievement; that I was hoping that no one would notice the change-over to Al Earl. (Perhaps you were as well)

I spoiled that possibility by missing the first Board meeting that I was to Chair.

Thanks to Maggie Nixon, things went on just fine at the Board and I can excuse my absence with the fact that Liz and I have moved to Lake County, and except for two days, when my sons were available, Liz and I did all the work. The Board meeting fell on one of those two days when we had help and in addition, were blessed with a free, full sized truck.

And then I forgot the President's report for the Signal! Certainly by now, everyone would have noticed that Marilyn is gone and we are in a new regime. Al's time.

Oh well, we do celebrate the worth and dignity of every individual.

On to serious business and an issue that worries the Board and Worship committee --Applause in the Sanctuary during Service (and it wouldn't be for Al that's for sure).

While it is certainly wonderful for us to enthusiastically support someone's happiness or achievement, we suggest that applause may not be the appropriate empathy. On Sundays we gather for a special time of togetherness (sometimes we even call it a holy time) and applause undermines the atmosphere.

Consider the opposite, if we disagreed with something said on Sunday, would we hoot and holler – I think not - -- please remember that on Sunday mornings we are creating a special place where meditation is more appropriate than applause.

The last Board meeting had other tricky issues to tax our ethics and logic.

One of these concerned the Philosopher's Café. That arms length program is quite successful and draws satisfying attendance. But, at the last event some people walked out because of the content and there were complaints to the Board. We addressed the issue at some length – it really is an issue of censorship although none of us used that word. All the more interesting for UU's – normally against censorship.

So the question is whether, at the Philosopher's Café, should we only hear speakers with whom we agree? Or should we risk our ethics and sometimes make a point by walking out when we strongly disagree? After a good discussion the Board ended up at the take the risk and walk out if necessary, position.

A similar discussion swirled around our Listserve. Some members find the volume (rather than the content) off putting and a suggestion came to the Board that we put a filter in place in order to have some of the content circulated by other means. In fact, that comes down to the same thing - someone would have to decide what goes where – someone would have to "censor" the listserv. The Board was not ready to "go there". We ask the recipients of listserv to risk it and walk out, if necessary, using their delete key!

As you might imagine, much of the Board's time is taken up with mundane matters but, even that, can be surprising and gratifying -- we were warned at this meeting that our insurance company was "no longer insuring organizations that actively sponsor, organize or encourage their members to participate in political, social, environmental or human rights activism"! Wow! I met with the company to see why this surprising change arose.

It arose because lots of churches are sending groups far away to places of poverty to dig, to build and to help. All of that adds risk and sometimes-costly payouts resulting in higher premiums. Not wishing to raise the premium, the company was trying to take the risk back to a former, safer world. In the end, we may not be

affected, since we don't send people far away, but it is good to see the reality of people and churches risking themselves to help others, and obviously paying the penalty of that risk.

Keep your ethics strong and keep risking both them and yourselves

Al Earl

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION UPDATE

Adult Religious Exploration opportunities:

For a quick **introduction to Unitarian** history, theology and this congregation, plan to stay after lunch on May 4 to meet downstairs with Rev. Linda.

Our Chosen Faith – Thursdays, May 29, June 5 & 12, 7-9 P.M. at the church. Facilitated by Rev. Linda. *Explore our U*U “sources” by reading a short book as a springboard to discussing our own relationship to these sources of spiritual “inspiration” (the church library has several copies, and we can order more if needed). If you are new or considering joining the church, or if you simply want to reflect a little more deeply on your personal relationship to the U*U “sources,” you are welcome to join us! It is also a good chance to learn about each other.*

Of options offered for consideration in the last newsletter, there was interest in this topic. Minimum registration: 4 people. There will be a sign-up sheet on the back table.

Other adult learning opportunities include our monthly Philosopher's Café (see announcement) and Monday Meditation Circle.

Intergenerational events:

I hear the intergenerational games night was great fun, with friends old and new across the generations. I was very sorry to miss it! A warm thank you to Carrie Broughton, and all of you who helped to make it happen. We will definitely do this again!

Our **“Family” choir** is off to a good start, and will be singing in the service on May 4th. Next we will prepare several pieces for the June 1st Flower Communion service. Noon to 12:30 P.M. Sundays, May 11, 18, and 25. All ages welcome.

Monday evening, May 26th, 7 P.M. will be a **Sing-along night**, focussing on folk and world music for all ages. Our Music Director will lead us in a fun evening, and you are welcome to bring your own favourites (as well as drums and other instruments). Come join the fun!

It is time to be thinking about our **Sorrento Family Camp** weekend! Yes, it is coming up June 6-8th this year. We moved it forward to simplify the beginning of the church and school year. The Kamloops congregation has the primary planning responsibility this time, but workshop ideas and leaders are welcome. There will be programming for all ages. Stay tuned!

Religious Exploration for Children and Youth:

Our Groovin' Green and Yogi Yellow groups this month will continue to focus upon “connecting with the earth.” Earth-centered sessions and activities, including planting a plot in the community garden, will continue through May. We hope to organize a youth excursion to a rock-climbing gym! We will need an adult or two along, so if any of you have experience in this area, give Lois a call.

Lois could use some additional help with the Yellows (4-7 year olds). How about volunteering with a friend? Team leadership can be especially enjoyable, and our children are rewarding to work with

It is time to begin thinking about next year. We'd love to be able to offer a third group on Sunday mornings in the fall (for 12 --or possibly 11 -- years and up), and begin our youngest class at age 3. To do this, we will need to expand our pool of adult leaders. There is nothing I like to do more when I have a free Sunday than to spend it with our children. Even after 30 years, I always learn something, enjoy the activities and discussion, and delight in getting to know our engaging youngsters. Whatever your age, think about giving it a try! You can get your feet wet by volunteering as an aid to begin with. The older class would be more discussion oriented and not require as much preparation and crafts, so there is something for everyone.

GREEN SANCTUARY UPDATE:

Reflections on Green Sanctuary Brainstorm Session, April 6, 2008

After consolidating everything that went on at the brainstorming session on Sunday, April 6, I am increasingly impressed at the level of excitement and creativity that came forth. To summarize for any of you who were not at the session:

The primary goal of becoming a Green Sanctuary is to recognize and care for the Earth as a part of ourselves and not just as something to use. The projects are tools for transformation. Participants were encouraged to keep this in mind when choosing projects. Becoming a Green Sanctuary is like developing a "love relationship" or a "marriage" which has stages to go through before the decision is made for commitment. The application process is "getting to know the lover". The candidacy is the "engagement period" during which the growing relationship is tested. Becoming accredited gives the "marriage certificate". The Green Sanctuary is the marriage, which will be lived and nurtured from that time on.

The process we are working with to choose projects is not "democracy" but "consensus". The tick marks were not just added up, and the 12 projects with the most tick marks chosen. We incorporated most of people's chosen ideas into 12 projects, developed around themes. These incorporated more project ideas and captured the excitement of more people because the ideas build naturally and organically into each other. Some ideas, which did not "fit", will be passed on to the board or committees for further consideration.

It was exciting to see people's interest and curiosity about exploring, in a variety of ways, our interconnectedness with Earth and all beings. This learning will build a strong lens through which things can be seen in new ways.

There was much excitement about "Sustainable Connections", an idea presented by Michelle Long from Bellingham, Washington at a lecture in Kelowna. This idea began with small actions that grew and, in a surprisingly short time, transformed that city. Adopting these ideas would bring many things to the attention of the larger community, putting Green Sanctuary far beyond our own doors to a place where we can make a huge difference.

In discussing all this, Gwen and I were thinking what a dynamic little congregation we have! Out of that came the thought to paraphrase "The Little Engine That Could" to "The Little Congregation That Will change the world".

Thank you to all who completed questionnaires, offered project ideas, offered to be facilitators and who participated in the session! For those of you who have not had an opportunity to be involved so far, this is an open invitation. If you would like to be involved, please contact us.

Simonne Macklem
& Gwen Steele

ABOUT THOSE “ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT” QUESTIONNAIRES...

Almost all the members and friends listed in the UFK Directory received “Our Ecological Footprint” questionnaires from the UFK’s Green Sanctuary Project or were phoned about them. Many welcomed the survey as a way to assess their “environment behaviours” and to suggest new ones. We had great participation with ~50 questionnaires returned.

Overall, responses to the assessment provided two hunches about our UFK respondents. First, we appear to have concerns about the environment, as, for example, shown by responses about our composting, treatment of toxic substances, recycling of possessions and refuse and water conservation. Second, we say we’ll plan (or intend to improve on) a number of other areas, such as avoiding excess materials and food packaging, toxic cleaners and unnecessary driving and be open to and focused on other ways to make a difference.

On the other hand, some initiatives were seldom acknowledged by respondents, such as doing a “home energy audit”, insulating hot water and heating pipes and using more carpooling and public transportation. Column 1 indicated what people want to know more about, such as which companies do not cause harm to people or the environment, and where more “fair trade” foods are available; these will provide a basis for future discussion or newsletter items.

The answers on the questionnaires are as varied as our living circumstances. Where a question could be answered for a particular household, the 2008 responses could be useful in pinpointing that household’s “ecological footprint” progress in years to come, especially if the Green Sanctuary Committee decides to take a future snapshot of “where we are”.

For right now, we hope the questionnaires provide a basis for congregational and household discussions and also that they promote more environmentally friendly decisions. Already, the answers have helped to provide a basis for the April 6th UFK brainstorm of ideas for the Green Sanctuary Program.

Respectfully submitted,
Barb Mathur

GREEN SANCTUARY ACTION PLAN:

FOCUS AREA & NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES OR PROJECTS REQUIRED

- Worship & Celebration: 2 or more
- Religious Education: 2 or more
- Earth Justice: 2 or more
At least one of which will be a major ongoing collaboration with another congregation or organization to address an issues of environmental justice in your community or in the world.
- Sustainable Living: 4 or more, including at least one energy conservation activity
- Your choice: 2 additional activities in any of the four focus areas above

All project choices offered were consolidated around themes and relate in some way to the 5 R’s. Information gleaned/acquired/collected from the projects which would be useful in helping people live with respect for the interdependent web of life will be preserved and disseminated by means of digitally and through limited paper copies for those who do not have computer access.

Some may take more than the Candidacy period to complete, but the process can begin now.

THE FIVE R'S

Respect: For the interdependent web of life

- Sun, water, soil, nature, trees, plants
- All plants and animals who offer themselves as food and those who produce, prepare, and serve the food, and other goods we need to live
- All who work for the good of all, including for our fellowship

Rethink: Where our money goes and the effect our buying has on others

- Fast food, processed food, industrial food
- Purchasing things from far away
- How we get around
- Air travel and far away vacations

Reduce; Our use of

- Energy
- The “stuff” we buy and throw away
- Paper
- Personal vehicles
- Packaging of the things we buy

Reuse: Everything!

- Exchange clothes, books, music, fabric, tools, etc.
- Make new things out of old things
- Have sharing cupboards, notice boards for items to share or give away

Recycle: Everything we can

- Compost kitchen and garden waste
- Assist others to recycle (e.g., apartment dwellers and shut-ins)
- Recycle more stuff, more carefully

THE TWELVE PROJECTS:

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

1. Learn about our interconnectedness (at least 2 of the following, depending on availability):
 - Brain Swimme (Cosmology, the Universe Story)
 - Joanna Macy (“The work that Reconnects”, the Ecological Revolution/the Great Turning)
 - Aboriginal Guest (All My Relations/We are All Connected)
 - The Earth charter (The Earth, of which we are a part, has rights, too)
2. Earth Honouring Curriculum for children for part of each year

WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION:

3. In worship services, celebrate the Earth-honouring practices of our different traditions
4. Have an Earth Day Celebration, invite the community, (outdoors)

Note to Worship Committee for consideration:

- Regularly include Earth-honouring references in the service and/or order of service
- After the offering, express thanksgiving, placing the basket prominently to honour people's gifts
- Explore how the order of service can be handled in a more Earth-honouring way.

EARTH JUSTICE:

5. Water activism:
 - Local:
 - Adopt-a-stream
 - Join in local community water activism projects
 - Global (e.g., support a well in Africa, such as Ryan's well)
6. Earth Justice Workshops:
 - Ethical purchasing
 - Ethical investing
 - Chemical use (pesticides, skin care products, preservatives, food additives, fertilizers, etc.)
7. Activities associated with "Sustainable Connections" (ongoing partnership with another organization).
 - Slow Food events involving community leaders
 - Sponsor a community "Sustainable Living Fair" (local products and services)
 - Unitarian Green Award to businesses with good Earth ethics

SUSTAINABLE LIVING:

Community Action:

8. Develop a resource list of local businesses that support goods produced in ways that respect the Earth and its beings (people, animals, plants, water, habitats, etc.). Put information on the Web site, notice boards, limited paper copies. Publicize the list.
9. Investigate alternative barter systems (e.g., local market systems such as LETS and RRFM). Have a speaker come. Invite the community.

Energy:

10. Sponsor a "Carbon Footprint" workshop (invite the community) Information to include:
 - a viewing of "Inconvenient Truth"
 - alternative energy sources, how can we participate
 - carbon offsets, what they are, can one choose good ones, alternatives to offsets
 - implications for future "green" developments, (including for a new building for the Fellowship)
 - changing our linear waste cycle to a closed loop system thereby creating "Zero Waste"

Food:

11. A Gardens Project:
 - Workshop "How to grow food at home" (the "100 foot diet")
 - Connect people who need land for a garden with people who want to share their land
 - Plant gardens, harvest gardens, develop gardens in a school and parking lots (church...)
 - Learn to preserve food, do some food preserving in the church kitchen
 - Share the food from gardens
 - Plant low-water trees & bushes such as currants and apricots
 - Workshops to learn how to compost
12. Learn to reduce our footprint by assessing food choices (e.g. "Food, Faith and Sustainability" curriculum)

Note to Hospitality Committee for consideration:

- *Say a blessing before meals at the church.*
- *Simplify community lunches (e.g, soup & bread)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Meditation Circle: Mondays, 5:15 PM-6:15 P.M. Drawing from Western Buddhist Insight Meditation tradition, and led by Rev. Linda and Lloyd Horton. Everyone welcome. This is the month to let us know if you would like something like this to continue next year!

Join the HO/ME Team! Come check us out on **Monday, May 5th, 7 P.M.** Hospitality, Membership and Caring Committees are vital to our mutual ministry, especially at a time when the congregation is growing. The HO/ME team includes all these in-reach ministries and more!

Come get acquainted with the folks who see that we support and welcome our Members and Friends, or think they might like to get involved in this ministry team. We need your ideas as well as your helping hands – and we'll offer some tasty desserts as incentive! (If you are interested, but can't make it on the 5th, give Audrey Pekrul a call at 862-9312).

Thinking of Membership? We have two new Members at the moment who haven't been "celebrated," and will plan to recognize them, along with anyone else who feels ready to join us, early in June. Give Rev. Linda a call if you are considering joining. If you need more information, there are two opportunities coming up: an introductory session after lunch on May 4th, and the "Our Chosen Faith" class beginning late May (described under adult RE).

Message from Owen:

Greetings friends, It's been a while but I have been receiving all your emails since I left last Spring and I have been in touch with some of the members. I plan to see you again in June and will be looking for a place to reside if anyone knows such a situation, preferably a small apartment or bed sitting room near downtown or in it. I have been writing constantly and my CD is doing not badly. It has been picked up by the Celtic Women organization in the USA and who knows where that will lead.....back to Ireland maybe! Now that the winter has withdrawn I am looking forward to heat and light and the sound of tires on highways. Music to my ears! See you soon....Owen Neill
check out my blog: <http://wolfspoet.blogspot.com>

THOUGHTS ON BEING A GREETER:

On Sunday mornings, we Unitarians are welcoming guests into our home - our religious home. Our goal is that they will feel welcomed and comfortable.

I am in the process of establishing a list of people who would be willing to act as "Greeters". If you would "care to share" in this worthy activity please contact Audrey Semper at 860-0882 (email address is in the directory).

SORRENTO RETREAT:

Please note that this year the retreat will be happening in early June, and not in late September. This means a very tight deadline for registrations to be sent in. I have to let Sorrento Centre know our final numbers by May 26th. So please register early! We have friends visiting from UK the last week in May, so that deadline has to be firm, as we'll be away travelling with them. Details to follow. From: Heather and Mitch Stefanek

Simplicity Circle on May 9 at the UFK church

5:00 Clothing exchange -- bring your gently used clothes to exchange, left-overs will be donated to a charity
5:30 Pot Luck supper -- bring some simple food to share
6:30 Discussion with Nicole Kohnert on Composting: -- learn ways to incorporate composting into your daily life and garden

Calling all Circle Dancers

Our next evening of Circle Dance: Sunday, May 25/08 7-9 PM
The Knights Room, #102, Columbus Villa, 1920 Richter St. Kelowna

Juice and water are provided

Bring a friend... Newcomers and drop-ins welcome.

Suggested donation: \$2

For more info contact Simonne at 764-9539 or sagebush@telus.net

Philosopher Cafe: Wednesday, May 21st at Unitarian Church, 1310 Bertram St. Time: 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Key Speaker: Dr. Daniel Keyes, Associate Professor and Chair Cultural Studies, Department of Critical Studies UBC-Okanagan

Dr. Keyes will talk about how the attitude in British Columbia towards events like the upcoming 150 years celebration and the 2010 Olympics is still a very white colonial attitude. He will reference a celebratory event of Queen Elizabeth's coronation here in Kelowna in the 1950s called Crown Imperial, to illustrate how this attitude has been entrenched for a long time and then carry it forward to these current celebrations.

Join us and share your opinions and ideas. No charge but a donation to help cover costs appreciated. We have chosen this time slot to accommodate those who don't like travelling at night. Show your appreciation by attending and bring a friend.

Dates to Remember

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| May 9th – | Simplicity Circle 5:00 pm |
| May 21st – | Philosopher's Cafe 1:30 – 3:30 pm |
| May 25th – | Circle Dancing 7 – 9 pm |
| May 26th – | Sing Along Night 7 – 9 pm |
| May 29th - | <u>Our Chosen Faith</u> Book Discussion 7 – 9 pm |

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.

For more information about our congregation please visit our website: 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