



HORIZONS



Newsletter of The First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto
A religious community serving each person's spiritual journey

175 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario M4V 1P7
416-924-9654/Fax: 416-924-9655/ www.firstunitariantoronto.org
administrator@firstunitariantoronto.org
Member Canadian Unitarian Council www.cuc.ca

December 24 Special Service

Pastoral Care Committee: Allan Brand: 416-690-3242/ merrileebrand@hotmail.com
DLRE: Angela Klassen: 416-924-9654 x223/ angela@firstunitariantoronto.org
Minister: Rev. Shawn Newton: 416-924-9654 x222/ shawn@firstunitariantoronto.org

In the Pulpit

Sundays 10:30 am

Sunday 6 December

Rev. Shawn Newton "The Glow of Love"

Sunday 13 December

Rev. Shawn Newton "The Fire of
Commitment"

Sunday 20 December

Rev. Shawn Newton "The Light of Truth"

Thursday 24 December 7:00 pm

Rev. Shawn Newton "This
Shining Night"



Sunday 27 December Lay Chap-
lains Peter Brydon, Margaret Kohr, &
Margaret Rao "The Year in Review"

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Let There Be Joy! - Shawn Newton

There is a story told of an old priest who had heard the confessions of thousands of people over the course of his long career in ministry. When asked if there were any particular themes that emerged from his work in the confessional booth, he responded in a poignant, sad tone: "Yes, I'm afraid there is. Too many human beings are unhappy!"

Though we don't formally employ a confessional booth in our tradition, I actually do hear (or overhear) a variety of confessions in my line of work, most often by simply paying attention. Sometimes, this means I hear confessions on the subway or in line at the supermarket. Sometimes, I hear confessions in committee meetings or at coffee hour. Most often these intimate disclosures point to what people regard as failures in their personal relationships, or even failures of will to do what they feel they ought. There are, indeed, many unhappy people in this world. And, to be sure, there is much in this world that works against the goal of happiness.

But in this season unfolding all around us, this season set aside for joy in the darkest time of the year, may we all come to know the truth of these words by my colleague Tom Owen-Towle, that "The secret to the happy life is not to want one but to have one—yea, to be one." This season, may that be the gift we give, to each other and to ourselves.



Membership Information – Joan Hongoh

Toronto First is providing two different ways for new members to connect.

1. Introduction to First Unitarian and Unitarian/Universalism: Informational sessions the first Sunday of each month for those who are new to Unitarianism and want to know about our congregation: these half-hour meetings will be held in the Board Room (105). Our next meeting will be 6 December at 11:45 after the Sunday service.

2. Pathways to Membership, a course about Unitarianism: a broader orientation to the details of how our congregation functions, available for those ready to learn more about Unitarianism and who may be considering membership. It will give prospective members a chance to explore ways to connect their gifts and talents to Toronto First as well as connect with each other. During the winter session, we will have a one-day retreat on 20 February 10:00 am -3:00 pm. In the spring session, there will be a series of three Wednesday evenings on 19 & 26 May and 2 June 7:00-9:00 pm. If you are interested in attending,, please contact Joan Hongoh to register, at (Joan@firstunitariantoronto.org). Joining Services for new members of Toronto First Unitarian will be held on Sunday 28 February and Sunday 13 June, 2010.

A Child and a Star - Angela Klassen, D.L.R.E.



On my first Christmas as a Unitarian Universalist, I felt a bit uncertain about the Unitarian way of making meaning of this holiday season. In a denomination in which only about ten percent of us call ourselves Christian, I wondered, "is it Christmas without the divinity of Christ?" Instrumental in my understanding of the Unitarian way were two of our six Unitarian Universalist sources of belief: Spiritual Teachings of Earth Centred Traditions and Wisdom from the World's Religions. Today, Christmas has become a very Unitarian season for me. I see the wreaths and garlands that adorn doorways everywhere as our link to the ancient Druids, who hung evergreen boughs over their doors to shelter woodland spirits passing by. The twinkling lights and glowing candles connect us to the celebrations of light that are manifested in festivals as diverse as Yule, Hanukkah, Divali, and Loi Krathong.

As nativity displays appear around the city, I see the ancient and universal urge to celebrate the miracle of life and the hope inherent in it. The birth story of Buddha in the fifth or sixth century B.C.E. takes place in a park where angels, joined by four kings, held a net for his cradle and sang in celebration. Similarly, at the birth of Confucius, five heavenly musicians sang "This night a child is born. He shall be a great king, who shall make good laws and help people do what is right." And in 1200 B.C.E. the Hindu god Krishna was born of a virgin, and like that of Jesus, his birth was announced by a star. As the days grow short and darkness descends upon our spirits, we need the hope symbolized by the child and the star. This holiday season, may we find in our hearts a renewed appreciation for the miracle of new life, even though our own seems to be passing by too quickly. And may the light of peace, goodwill, and generosity shine as brightly in our hearts as it is said to have shone in the heavens so long ago.

Chaplain's Chat – Margaret Kohr

I have a confession to make. After a year of being a Lay Chaplain I have not yet been faced with performing a memorial service or funeral and, my confession, I am relieved. As Lay Chaplains, one of our goals is to provide personal and meaningful memorial services and every Lay Chaplain I speak with is adamant that this is the most fulfilling work we do. But I have been plagued by doubts. Will I be able to capture the wishes of the family and friends in a respectful and meaningful way? Will the eulogy of someone I may never have met reflect them accurately and with true depth and insight or will it be some cardboard, one dimensional representation? How can I get into the hearts and minds of families while they are at their most vulnerable? These have been some of my biggest fears. Taking courses offered through the CUC – Challenging Memorial Services, Create Your Own Memorial, and Grief and Spirituality – and the course offered here at Toronto First, Living for a Good Death, has given me the opportunity to explore more deeply the spectrum of grief and its aftermath. The experience shared by my fellow Lay Chaplains provides ongoing insight and important practical tips. So although I now feel better prepared and more confident that I will be able to deliver the kind of ceremony that will ease the grief of family and friends, there's only one way to know for sure. To be honest I'm not in a hurry to find out.

Workshops, Gatherings, Groups Looking For Your Participation

Adult Program Revitalization– Rod Branch

The Board struck a Task Force that has been examining ways to invigorate the Adult Program, looking at past programs and those of other congregations but we need your input. Please return the questionnaires circulated at the November 29 service, by Sunday 13 December in drop-off boxes provided. The Adult Program Task Force: Kalina Grewal, Nancy Kasper, Gerta Moray, Hope Paul, Rod Branch and Angela Klassen

Artists Needed for Green Team

To create an artistic installation for Toronto First's entrance that reminds visitors and members that we are a tap-water-friendly building. It might be a poster, a poem, a collage, a piece of pottery, a wall-hanging, or some other work. The winner will have the work commissioned with all expenses paid, together with a small honorarium. Make a proposal in words and sketch on an 8 ½" by 11" page, before the new 15 January deadline. Place your submission in the Green Team box outside the office, or deliver it to a member of the judging team: Olja Muller, Bruce Schwartzentruber, Stan Yack

Brown Bag Seminars – Nancy Kasper

Seminars will meet on the third Thursday of the month from noon until 3:00 pm, starting in January. Attendees will bring their own lunch; coffee and tea will be available. At an initial gathering, attendees indicated they wanted presentations on social issues, travel, environmental issues, and entertainment/readings. Check *Horizons* and the Order of Service dates and topics.

Cakes for the Queen of Heaven, Part 2 – Kate Chung

"On the Threshold" continues our journey to reclaim stories of powerful women in ancient Judaism and early Christianity. We will look at the silencing and brutalization of women that accompanied the rise of patriarchal religion and society; we will celebrate the exciting new world-view and theology, and explore related personal and social changes. Part 2 (8 sessions) begins Monday 11 January. Registration: \$25, sliding scale, 2nd and 4th Mondays, 7:30-9:30 pm. There will be room for a few new participants. Facilitator: Sharon Rose. For information: Kate Chung (416-925-0745).

Sacred Circle Dance Cancellation – Margaret Rao

Sacred Circle Dance is cancelled for December as a Christmas/Solstice Celebration will happen instead. Our dance circle will resume on Friday 15 January at 7:30 pm in Shaw Hall.

UCGT – Calvin Drake

The Annual Conference and Meeting of the Unitarian Congregations of Greater Toronto will be held on Monday 14 December 6:00-9:00 pm at Don Heights Unitarian Congregation. A light supper will be available before for suggested \$5.00 donation. Visit the website at www.cuc.ca/gta for package.

Upholsterer Needed – Jean Galt

To recover four wooden chairs for the minister's office/lounge area. Contact Jean Galt (416-461-4903 or pjeang@sympatico.ca) or Shawn Newton.

Wheel of Life—The Caring Committee

Best Wishes to all those celebrating Happy Events in December



Wishing a Speedy Recovery to:

Paul Carr who had a fall and is now able to get out for short walks; Paul says he did not know it was possible to hurt oneself so badly and have nothing to show for it. He will have x-rays soon

Congratulations to:

Richard Peltier, husband of Claude Marchand, and University of Toronto physicist, who has been awarded the 2010 Bower Award, one of the international science community's most prestigious honours. This award recognizes his insights into the interactions between the fundamental building blocks of the earth Dr Peltier's work will be used to forecast climate change.

Our Sincere Condolences to:

Gwen and Larry Wulff, Dr. Gordon Hatcher and other family members on the death of Gwen's sister, Norma Hatcher, in Ottawa on 4 November. Norma, a life-long Unitarian, recently suffered a stroke, followed by a heart attack. She and her husband, Gordon, were Charter Members of this church when it was dedicated.

Andrea LeDuc and Deirdre Yates and their families on the death of their mother Elaine Oakes. Elaine was a long time, well liked, and active member of our congregation and of Unicamp. Both her daughters were regular attendees of our church school throughout their childhoods. Elaine's death was very sudden after a fall.

Board Report (November) Dorene Jacobs

Weighty matters in November. Two conclusions regarding the Green Team's mandate were revisited; an advocacy role requires further discussion. Executive created a task force (Fred Lautenschlaeger, Judy Clarke, Richard Kirsh) to propose next steps for improving the front patio. We must consider city requirements plus identified criteria of key congregational stakeholders (Property Committee, Green Team, convenors, staff, and trustees). Follow-up to the congregational vote on sanctuary requires two new bodies: an implementation committee and a negotiating team to deal with refugee status-related matters. Little financial change occurred with the prospect of an \$11,000 year-end deficit. Concern was expressed about unpaid pledges. Youth Representative David Wilson reported a budget priority of funds for youth-focused conferences. Tax trade cheques were suggested and the group was advised to consult Wendie Saltarski about budget requests. The recent robbery of coat pockets in the narthex and recommended precautions have been communicated to the congregation. Important dates were approved: Open Meeting on the Budget on 10 January, Congregational Budget Meeting on Sunday 24 January; Annual General Meeting on 30 May. Jane Larimer, coffee co-ordinator, reported plans for a "no-nut" policy for coffee hour.

2011 CUC Annual Conference – Art Brewer



In May 2011, our congregation will host the Annual Conference and Meeting of the Canadian Unitarian Council. Hundreds of Unitarian Universalists from across the country will attend, and over 1,000 are expected for the Sunday morning service. In November, the 22-member Host Committee met to brainstorm possible themes for the conference, listened to a brief presentation on project management fundamentals, and came up with forty-seven ideas. This material now goes to the CUC's conference planning committee where a final decision will be made.

Kyoto Protocol and Toronto First – Fred Lautenschlaeger

Under the leadership of the Green Team, Toronto First has initiated a Green Fund to which contributions are made toward energy-saving options. Our gas-based heating system was improved, and heat-insulating blinds in the downstairs area have reduced electric energy consumption by 35% over six months, despite last year's cold winter. The Property Committee set lower temperatures in hallways and the stairwell. This, together with cooler temperatures during this summer, reduced the energy consumption budget by \$3000 as of September. The congregation's contribution to the reduction in greenhouse gases is significant. The Green Team believes that if such practices were adapted more generally, a simple change of habits might be sufficient to reduce the need for another nuclear power plant. These results can allow Toronto First to declare itself a congregation that has surpassed the Kyoto Protocol requirements.

Amnesty International Group 142 – Ted Wood



Thank you to everyone who supported Human Rights through your generous donations and letter writing on Amnesty Sunday in November. International Human Rights Day is 10 December. We will continue the celebration of Human Rights on Wednesday 16 December at 7:30 pm by sending greeting cards to prisoners of conscience and human rights defenders. It will be a festive event where we share some holiday snacks and refreshments. All are welcome to join the fun. Letter writing will take place on Sunday 27 December after the service. Contact Ted Wood (416-429-6351) for further information.

UUUNO Christmas Present for Children of the World – Eryl Court

Our Unitarian-Universalist United Nations Office is working to provide a livable future for all Earth's children, via its varied programs, including "Every Child is Our Child (ECOC)", which operates with AIDS orphans in Ghana. If you have not yet made your contribution, or if you want to do more to support the World's children this way, please make out your cheque to "First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto re UU-UNO" and mail it or bring it in to our church before the end of the year. Every gift of \$10 or more is entitled to an Income Tax receipt. Thank you; your generosity will enrich your life.

Midwinter Retreat – Kathy Thompson

Sign up on Sundays for the Midwinter Retreat, 5-7 February, 2010. Our theme, "A Life of Integrity" features Gretta Vosper, keynote speaker and best-selling author of *With or Without God: Why the way we live is more important than what we believe*.



In more than a dozen workshops, participants will reflect on and learn about how they live their lives. With just the right balance of relaxation and learning, this promises to be a "not-to-be-missed" Midwinter Retreat. Visit our table in Workman Hall after service in December. Sign up before 20 December to receive the special early bird discount.

Board of Directors

President: *Ellen Campbell*
 Vice President: *Jane Larimer*
 Secretary: *Judy Clarke*
 Treasurer: *Chris Moore*



Members: *Robbie Brydon, Anne-Lise Diehl, Ian French, Richard Kirsh, Dominic Stones*

Our Lay Chaplains

*Peter Brydon Margaret Kohr
 Margaret Rao*

To enquire about Lay Chaplain services,
 phone Coordinator Beth Windeler
 416-924-9654 x301 or
chaplains@firstunitariantoronto.org.

Editorial Policy – HORIZONS is published monthly, with the exception of the July and August issues which are combined. Members and friends are invited to submit articles of interest for publication. The next Submission Deadline is 5 pm Friday 11 December for January 2010.

Submit articles electronically in plain formatting (no bold, underline, CAPS, italics, centering)
 at: <http://www.firstunitariantoronto.org/horizons>

Items received after the 5 pm deadline will not be included in the printed newsletter, but will be published in the online edition. Help Toronto First save money and paper by receiving your copy of Horizons online. Sign up on the website immediately above.



Editor: *Louise Ripley*

Production: *John Lewis*

Proofreaders:

*Shirley Grant Margaret Rao
 Jane Tuomi Larry Wulff*

– Get more HORIZONS news, views and events at www.FirstUnitarianToronto.org –

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
December 		1 4:00 pm Tea and conversation w/ Shawn 	2 2:00 Living for a Good Death	3 7:30 pm Choir 	4 1:00 pm Conversational French	5 2:00 Introduction to the Enneagram
6 10:30 am "The Glow of Love" Shawn Newton 10:30 am Children's Chapel 11:45 am Introduction to First Unitarian and Unitarian Universalism	7 7:00 pm Yoga 	8 4:00 Tea and conversation w/Shawn 	9 11:00 am Living in Spirit Daytimers 2:00 Living for a Good Death 7:00 Board Meeting	10 7:00 pm Board Meeting 7:30 pm Choir	11 1:00 pm Conversational French 	12 10:00 am Men's Group 10:00 am Women's Group 
13 10:30 am "The Fire of Commitment" Shawn Newton 12:00 N Sanctuary Space Meeting 12:15 pm Afterthoughts	14 7:00 pm Yoga 7:30 Cakes for the Queen of Heaven	15 7:00 pm Our Pagan Grove	16 7:30 pm Amnesty International	17 1:30 pm Booktalk 7:30 pm Choir	18 6:30 pm Christmas Party	19
20 10:30 am "The Light of Truth" Shawn Newton 12:15 pm After Sermon Discussion 12:15 CUSJ film Rethink Afghanistan	21	22	23	24 7:00 pm "This Shining Light" Christmas Eve Service 	25 Christmas Day 	26
27 10:30 am "The Year in Review" Lay Chaplains Service 11:30 Amnesty Letter Writing	28	29	30	31		