



## *Fundy Wave*

### Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Saint John

*Unitarian Universalist religious services take place every Sunday -- except July and August -- at 10.30 am (except in special circumstances) at our building, 545 Sandy Point Road, in the north end of Saint John, New Brunswick.*

*See "Sunday services" in this newsletter for details.*

**Happy Holidays!**

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### **#1 Sunday Services in December Times as Given**

**December 6 – Time 10.30 a** Coordinator Connie. Service Leader – Laurie. The annual tree and church decorating.

#### **All I want for Christmas is..."**

Members of the congregation are invited to bring an ornament for our tree and share their recollections of a Christmas past when you held your breath hoping for that special gift and what it meant to you. Or what you wish for this year, what gift would make this a very special Christmas.

**December 13 – Evening Service at 7.00 pm** Coordinator – Kathleen  
**Blue Christmas.**

Blue? Yes, as in "I am feeling blue." Not everyone is up and cheery for the Christmas holidays. Dealing with the death of a loved one, facing life after divorce or separation, coping with the loss of a job, living with cancer or some other dis-ease that puts a question mark over the future, and a number of other human situations make parties and joviality painful for many people in our congregations and communities. There is a growing attentiveness to the needs of people who are blue at Christmas. This is a time to be reflective, holding out in hope for the return of light in the mist of darkness. Everyone is welcome to join us on Dec.13th for our 'Blue Christmas' service.

**December 20 – Evening Service at 7.00 pm** Coordinators Connie and Caroline.  
The winter solstice is December 21.

**ANNUAL CANDLELIGHT CAROL SERVICE**

“**To drive the dark away...**” Come join us as we celebrate the winter solstice and the coming of Christmas in words and song. We will light candles to make brighter the shortest day and sing carols to rejoice in the peace and joy of the season. Welcome Yule!!

**December 27 –Time 10.30 am** Coordinator – Joanne

**The Many Faces of New Year.** There will be a short talk on New Years in different cultural traditions followed by a discussion on what New Years means to each of us.

**#2 A UU Perspective on Christmas**

What is the midwinter festival for Unitarians? Certainly they don't all see it in the same way. Some want to get as close to the traditional religious celebration of Christmas as they conscientiously can. Some want to stay outside all observances belonging to the Christian tradition and simply celebrate the solstice. Some find it difficult or impossible to celebrate at all. It is important that our celebration of the season should authentically express our own beliefs and lifestyle. Being a Unitarian has always entailed a greater or lesser degree of non-conformity, but not nonconformity for the sake of nonconformity. There is much in both the religious and the secular celebration of Christmas that most Unitarians can honestly and joyfully make their own. There is also much that most Unitarians will reject as inconsistent with what they want to be, and to do, and for which they will seek more positive alternatives. In one way or another, Unitarians do participate in the midwinter festivities. The seasonal services at our churches are among the best attended of the whole year.

(Excerpted from “**A Unitarian Interpretation of the Midwinter Festival**” by Rev. Dr. Phillip Hewett, published by CUC March 2003)

Our December services promise to echo Rev. Hewett’s words. We will decorate our tree in the tradition of the ancients and we will share our thoughts about what Christmas means to us. We will recognize the sadness of the Season as well in the celebration of a Blue Christmas and we will sing carols and hear stories heralding the return of the light in our annual Candlelight Carol service. And at the very end of December, we will look at the many faces of the New Year. In our best Saint John UU tradition, the Season will be celebrated and acknowledged anew.

### **#3 Thank You**

A big thank you to everyone who helped make our second annual fall supper a resounding success. We raised \$1000.00 and we proved again that we are “the little church that can”.

### **#4 Youth Activities**

On the weekend of Oct 24-26, David Pollock and I attended the Maine Fall Con in Kennebunk, ME. It was an amazing success, seeing only friends, getting involved with planning and leadership roles, but most of all, seeing all of the new faces! In the Maine youth con system, the year of entry into the youth con world is in grade 7, and fall con is the time when all of the new grade 7's come out to their first youth con, and what a turnout! Over 10 new faces, coming from all around the state, re-assuring us that there will be youth to keep these con's running! The next Maine Con will be once again in Bangor, ME, on the first or third week of February. I would also like to deeply thank Judith and Randy Pollock for taking their weekend to drive us down to Kennebunk!

Kaleb McNeil

**Youth Group** will meet at the regular time on December 12 and December 19

**Owl Training for Youth** starts in January. If interested, please contact Steve McCavour

**The adult Owl Programme**, to be led by Allison Calvern and George DeMille, is slated to begin in January. Contact Steve McCavour if interested.

### **#5 CUC Project Coordinator**

The CUC has advertised for a Project Coordinator. The job description is at

<http://www.charityvillage.com/cvnet/viewlisting.aspx?id=204224>–

If you have any questions, please contact [phil@cuc.ca](mailto:phil@cuc.ca). Philip Strapp - Financial Administrator,

Canadian Unitarian Council (416) 489-4121 [www.cuc.ca](http://www.cuc.ca)

**#6 Children’s RE** will be held on **December 6**. After the children share their ornaments with the adults upstairs, we will convene in the CRE room for our special sharing of a UU Christmas. We will look at one special Unitarian carol, “Within the shining of a star” and examine how it is different from traditional carols and how it speaks to our understanding of Christmas. This will be followed by Christmas treats and singing. There will be no morning services on December 13 and 20. Child care will be available on December 27.

## **#7 A CHRISTMAS CAROL**

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is often considered the finest English novelist of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His enduring comic characters are part of the culture. He is known as well for exposing the wretchedness of the downtrodden, for his anger at their heartless oppression and for his contribution to the celebration of Christmas. Although Dickens was baptized and reared in the Church of England and was a nominal Anglican most of his life, he turned to Unitarianism in the 1840's as a broad church alternative. He associated with Unitarians until the end of his life. As a young reporter Dickens associated with other contributors to radical journals including William Fox, a Unitarian minister and John Foster, a Unitarian who became a lifelong friend.

He traveled to America hoping to find in the United States progressive religious bodies, free from state control. Although disappointed with most American churches, he returned home full of enthusiasm for New England Unitarians in general and William Ellery Channing in particular. Dickens religious beliefs were those of most 19<sup>th</sup> century British Unitarians. In his will he urged his children to adopt a liberal, tolerant and non-sectarian interpretation of Christianity. In 1843, he created the first and greatest of his Christmas books, A CHRISTMAS CAROL. The story, and its characters, Ebenezer Scrooge, Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim, defined the holiday's meaning for the English speaking world as the regenerative spirit of generosity, or what Dickens called his "Carol philosophy". The heart of Dickens's social criticism and his religious message is found in A CHRISTMAS CAROL, his four other Christmas books, and in many seasonal stories. Dickens loved children. He portrayed them with sympathy and understanding. For his own adored sons and daughters he devised elaborate entertainments. They continued to idolize him, though his marriage was failing. Their mutual affection cooled as the children became adolescents, and Dickens was disappointed in them as adults. Ever since this Unitarian inspired story was written it has been a popular story read during Christmas time encouraging the listeners to follow the spirit in which it was written. \_\_\_JvW

## **#8 Women at the Well**

Women at the Well will meet on Monday, DEC. 14/09 at the church from 6:00 - 8:00pm. Potluck followed by discussion. Everyone welcome.

## **#9 Rome wonders about life in space**

The Vatican has called in experts to study the possibility of extra-terrestrial alien life and its implication for the Catholic Church. The director of the Vatican Observatory, the Rev. .Jose Gabriel Funes, who is an astronomer and a Jesuit priest, said "The questions of life's origins and of whether life exists elsewhere in the universe are very suitable and deserve serious consideration." He presented the results on Nov. 10 of a conference of astronomers, physicists, biologists and other experts to discuss astrobiology — the study of the origin of life and its existence elsewhere in the cosmos.

Earlier this year, the Vatican also sponsored a conference on evolution to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*.

## #10 WORK LIST

DATE	WELCOMER	REFRESHMENTS
Dec 6/09	Caroline S	George L & Nancy H
Dec 13/09	Fred W	Refreshments Provided
Dec 20/09	Carol M	Refreshments Provided
Dec 27/09	Connie H	Kaye S & Bob S
Jan 03/10	George A	Judith P & Joanne B

### **ROMERO HOUSE:**

Dec 20/09 – Judith P, David P, Joanne B, Andrea J, Frank L, Jenny L

## #11 Off-year voting in the US (November 3<sup>rd</sup>)

In **MAINE**, opponents of gay marriage overturned a state law at the ballot box that would have allowed same-sex nuptials. The Maine legislature approved gay marriage in the summer.

In the **STATE OF WASHINGTON**, voters narrowly approved an "everything but marriage" law that extends many local benefits to gay couples.

## **A change in Utah**

SALT LAKE CITY passed ordinances banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The Mormon church supported the legislation, the first time it has backed any measure on gay rights, because, its spokesman said, the new laws do no damage to traditional marriage.

## #12 Ministerial Search Committee

The Ministerial Search Committee has been busy studying the surveys and preparing a preliminary review. Plans include organizing focus groups around congregational hopes, dreams and expectations in the search for a new part time minister. Look for more details in the January Newsletter. Please feel free to contact Caroline, George A or Susanna if you would like to set up a time to talk about your vision for our church and/or your concerns as we look to the future.

Caroline Smith

## #13 Ottawa welcomes a new minister

The First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa established a new minister in a ceremony on November 16th. He is The Reverend John N. Marsh, who becomes the 15th settled minister in Ottawa.

Rev. Marsh is a graduate of Harvard Divinity School and was ordained as a Unitarian Universalist Minister in 1982. Since then, he has served congregations in Edmonton, San Francisco, Syracuse and Utica.

First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa is the largest UU congregation in Canada and was formed in 1898.

## #14

### A Breakthrough.

For the first time in New Brunswick history, a public media source recognised the efforts of service women and service men that are or were lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT). In the November 11<sup>th</sup> issue of the provincial Telegraph Journal newspaper, an ad was placed in the Remembrance Day insert to “remember and to honour” all those who served and continue to serve their country and who identify as being LGBT. This ad was sponsored by Port City Rainbow Pride Inc. and is the beginning of what is hoped to be an annual tradition. Maybe a rainbow wreath can be laid at the cenotaph next year in the Port City.

The photo is a representation of the famous American Iwo Jima war memorial with soldiers raising their nation’s flag. The parody image portrays four gay men (assumably soldiers of the LGBT cause) raising the iconic rainbow flag to show victory over discrimination, oppression and myopic thinking. Some may argue their flag was raised prematurely. The image is on the PCRPR website until the end of November.

[www.PortCityRainbowPride.com](http://www.PortCityRainbowPride.com)

By: D. S. Mack MacKenzie,

Director of Communications for Port City Rainbow Pride Inc Saint John, New Brunswick  
[Communications@portcityrainbowpride.com](mailto:Communications@portcityrainbowpride.com)

## #15 MESSAGE FROM LINDA -- The meaning of membership

One of the things we know about congregations is that they are as vital and engaged as their membership is.

Committed members who understand the relevance and importance of the work their congregations are doing make thriving congregations possible! James Luther Adams, respected Unitarian Theologian and teacher often made the point in his classes. “Strong, effective, lively liberal churches, capable of altering positively the direction of their whole society, will be those liberal churches whose lay members can say clearly what are their own most important loyalties, as church members”.

Congregations therefore, should think carefully about their membership orientation and integration processes. We aren’t served by members who can’t articulate the meaning of their membership. Similarly, congregations that help their members understand the meaning of their membership will be well served by a corresponding understanding of their membership in the national association of Unitarian Universalist congregations: The Canadian Unitarian Council.

How is the relationship of individuals and congregations as they relate to the CUC important? What mutual responsibilities do congregations have for one another through their membership of the CUC? These are important questions.

The CUC is an association of congregations. Our members are the congregations in Canada. In joining the CUC those congregations are making a commitment to the larger movement and to other congregations. Our Mission and Vision statements say that the CUC: is a voice for liberal religious communities in Canada, is relevant to contemporary life, and acts to enhance Unitarian Universalism in Canada. Any consideration of the nature of the relationship between individuals, congregations and the collective body, the CUC, will serve to help us understand our mutual responsibilities – the rights and

responsibilities of membership.

As part of their membership in the CUC, congregations can reasonably expect to support the organization in various ways. Some of the responsibilities of membership might include:

Stay informed – read CUC materials that are circulated, so that you are aware of the current initiatives and issues, provide accurate and timely information to the office so that we can keep accurate membership records, leadership lists and membership numbers, ensure you have the maximum number of delegates allowed at the CUC's annual meeting (your delegates are your congregation's voice on CUC business), remit Annual Program Contribution payments as promised and on time, and connect with others, through e-mail, e-lists, telephone and through participation at regional and national events, and use the supports and services we offer.

In return for congregational support, congregations can expect to receive benefits too. Benefits that congregations can expect from the CUC include

- training for congregational leaders in areas such as stewardship, membership, conflict management, volunteer development, worship planning, small group ministry leadership, meeting facilitation, etc
- coaching and support for congregational leaders,
- leadership training – through CUUL school and other programming,
- administration of the Lay Chaplaincy program,
- a voice on national issues
- publications and electronic forums that support membership awareness of the work of the CUC and which support congregational connections.

The relationship between congregations and the national association – the CUC – is a mutual one. With the engagement of our members, we are all better able to foster the kind of vital, liberal, religious communities that can make a difference – in the lives of our members, our congregations and in the world.

-- Linda Thomson, Director of Regional Services

## **#16 Congratulations Monet**

**Silver Medal:** On November 21, 2009 in Halifax Monet Comeau will receive, from the Royal Conservatory of Music, a silver medal for achieving the highest mark in Atlantic Canada for Grade 5 Voice. This is the third time Monet has received this distinction. She previously won the Silver Medal for grade 2 and grade 4 voice.

## **#17 PASAGE receives Community Star Award**

Sgt. Bob Buck, President, and the Board of Directors of PASAGE (Preventing Addiction: Substance Abuse and Gambling Education) are pleased to announce that they are one of eight recipients of The Community Star Award presented by the Minister of Health, The Honourable Mary Schryer, in Fredericton on November 18. This award recognizes their efforts to prevent substance abuse in their community and their contribution to the health and well-being of the community. George Allen is secretary and member of the Board. He has been with PASAGE for several years and he often attends and supports Joyce Melvin's drug awareness presentations at schools in the greater Saint John area. He has been described as "volunteer extraordinaire."

PASAGE Saint John, a United Way agency, has a mandate to prevent youth addictions. It supports adolescents and children in making responsible choices regarding substance abuse and addiction by providing up-to-date information and education. PASAGE and its Executive Director, Joyce Melvin, provide support to and work with parents, educators and other community agencies in promoting awareness and preventing adolescent addictions. PASAGE recently celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> year of service to the Greater Saint John area.

## **#18 The Cushing Connection**

**Travis Wentworth Cushing** died November 18, 2009. He was born July 28, 1915 and was a very well known educator in Saint John. The Cushing family, originally from Massachusetts, were among the first Unitarian families in St. John. Travis Cushing's grandfather, George Byron Cushing, a member of the Unitarian Society of St. John, donated the pulpit Bible in 1874. It is the bible we still have today. The church is indebted to Travis Cushing for his contribution to the knowledge of early Unitarianism in the Saint John area.

Based on research and numerous interviews with Mr. Cushing, Doug Devine wrote a monograph entitled "The Unitarians of Saint John, New Brunswick". (This can be found in the library in the office).

## **#19 7 Principles Song**

One – each person is worthwhile  
Two – be kind in all you do  
Three – we help each other learn  
Four – and search for what is true  
Five – each person has a say  
Six – work for a peaceful world  
Seven – the web of life's the way  
That will bring us back to me and UU...

Sung to the tune of "Doe A Deer"  
many times as you like.

Repeat as

## **#20 Healthy Congregations**

What is a Healthy Congregation? Anne Odin Heller in her book CHURCHWORKS states, " a "well" congregation knows how to join in the satisfaction of shared work; to relax, worship, and meditate together; to be stimulated, supported, and challenged to personal growth, to exercise it's social, learning and justice muscles; to be well fed by time, talent and the treasure of it's members."

Heller believes that just as we are not perfect as individuals, our organizations are not perfect either, and we don't need to exhaust ourselves trying to be perfect. She writes about the many ways in which people can work together in a healthy way and also how to recognize when we are 'running out of steam' .

I thought I would share each month in our newsletter some of what Heller writes about Healthy Congregations

Kathleen Webster

#22

## Snow On Sedum

Stout sedum lies  
embossed beneath  
late Autumn snow's  
protective sheath.

Perennial...  
it lies in rest,  
through Winter's cold  
without distress.

As Fall once more  
lays down its touch;  
working magic  
within its clutch,  
sedum's splendor  
will spring anew,  
when brushed in bright  
abundant hue.

As Autumn's Joy  
becomes aglow  
once more adorned  
in brilliant show.

Nancy Hemsworth

### **#21 Building Committee -**

As you may have noticed downstairs the baseboard in the former conference room has been replaced with a carpet strip along the wall. More strips are being prepared and will be installed along the remaining unfinished walls. The security system should be operational by the end of the month. A guide sheet is being prepared to explain the procedure for entering and leaving the building.

On this point, **IT IS IMPORTANT** that the last person leaving the building on any occasion is responsible for ensuring that all thermostats are turned down, all lights are off and all doors locked. Twice in recent weeks thermostats have been left on high setting, and twice (on different occasions) the back door has been left unlocked. If you are the last one out at any time please ensure that these points are observed. Thank You.

## #23 Choir Practice

There will be choir practice on **December 12** at Wendy's house at 7 PM. We will be rehearsing the music for both the Blue Christmas and the Candlelight Carol Service. We welcome all of you who love to sing.

We hope to schedule two more practices for Christmas music in the next two weeks. An e-mail will be sent to all choir members with details as to date, place and time.

## #24 Sinterklaas

Sinterklaas is not Santa Claus. Sinterklaas is a kind, dignified and generous Bishop, who has no religious affiliations. His legends place him in Persia but in the story the Dutch embrace, he comes from Spain every year on his birthday Dec. 5.

It is not an official holiday and it is business and school as usual. Sinterklaas may make a short visit in the morning to some classrooms and distribute some candy, but after that, it's lessons as usual. We don't decorate the house nor dress up and have no special dinner. There are special Sinterklaas songs which are practiced in school prior to the big day. For Christmas we have the traditional Christmas songs we sing here.

He comes on a steamboat from Spain with his piebald horse, his helper Black Pieter who carries a big sack of presents and a roe. The last is to spank naughty children with; it is a bundle of short branches. But I never saw him use it. The boat arrives in Amsterdam. Sinterklaas rides on his nameless horse over the rooftops and Black Pieter throws presents for everybody down the chimneys. The children have put their shoe by the fireplace with a carrot and some hay for the horse the night before and usually find some candy in it in the morning. Distributing the presents happens in the evenings. No present comes without a rhyming note and the gift is often wrapped in such a way that it might look like something else, could be hidden somewhere or is a joke, like a bar of soap that is really marzipan or vice versa. Unmarried young or not so young men and woman often get large (2'-3') speculaas dolls. Special treats for Sinterklaas evening are pepernoten (marble-sized hard gingerbread balls). speculaas,taai-taai(gingerbread) marzipan and hot chocolate. The pepernoten are often thrown in the door when he makes an appearance by special arrangements.

Once the day is over, Christmas songs are rehearsed in preparation for Christmas. But by the time that day comes, Sinterklaas has gone back to Spain.

Hendrien Kippers

To celebrate the **Festive Season**  
the **Worship Committee** and the **Choir** have planned a wonderful  
series of services for December.  
Please make a point of attending,  
and bring family and Friends.

**See you all there!!**

## **#25 Shavings From The Board**

The Board of Trustees did not meet during October as there wasn't any business of pressing importance to deal with – a good sign, I guess. However, since the beginning of the church year, we have met four times to oversee committee work, keep up-to-date on financial and administrative matters and hopefully to set a tone or direction of church affairs.

### **So what have we done, lately?**

I think a very important task of the Board is to encourage, facilitate, monitor and provide feedback to committees. The three busiest committees – i.e. Lifespan Learning, Worship and Ministerial Search – are working very effectively, thanks to their members, and the Board's role has been one of oversight rather than direct intervention. Worship Committee takes care of all Sunday morning services, which, in my opinion have been excellent; Lifespan Learning now comprises Children, Youth and Adult RE responsibilities. Having one committee to direct all RE, we think, will enable all learning/educational activities to be better integrated, and spread the workload. Of course, Ministerial Search is a huge job, and the three committee members are working according to plan.

Not to be overlooked, the Lay Chaplaincy committee has guided us through the selection and appointment of a new Lay Chaplain. The final documents from the CUC and NB Provincial government have now been received, and Connie Humphrey is our newest Lay Chaplain, alongside Heidi Bundschuh.

As well, the Building Committee has been involved in some well-received renovations during the summer and fall. One cannot help but notice the improved usefulness and appearance of the kitchen and board room areas.

And how about that FALL SUPPER!! Another great success – both financially and in terms of providing a wonderful opportunity to open up to the larger community. You may be interested to know that by using only less than half of the proceeds from last year's and this year's fall suppers, we have purchased our own chafing dishes and a new refrigerator.

### **Some current or future projects, or decisions taken by the Board:**

1. A donation of \$50.00 has been made to Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice (CUSJ), to assist in the publication of their newsletter.
2. Discussion is on-going with the PALS co-ordinator at Hazen White St. Francis School, to determine the most effective way to help with a noon-time lunch program. The thinking is now that we would cook a noon lunch (soup, macaroni, hot dogs, etc.) once a month for all 150 students. Do you think we can do it? Let me know if you think it's feasible to start in January. It should be fun!
3. We are going to explore the costs of some form of wheelchair accessibility (we have some new ideas we want to look into), and replacing the exterior siding next summer. At the present time, we will not commit to any expenditure, but will merely get some rough estimates.

4. We are going to look into commercial external signage, where we can post announcements and advertise who we are.
5. Getting the security system in the building placed in service. This will mean that once it is activated, everyone entering the building will have to enter a security code, and re-arm the equipment upon leaving. There will be plenty of lead-up time; so as the time approaches everyone will be given their access code, and instructions on how to use the equipment.

At this past meeting, we took a close look at our financial situation, and our investment options. Our mortgage situation is well in hand, and since the rate is favourable we will not attempt to re-negotiate before the present term ends. In addition to a contingency fund that is invested in very secure, but low yield, guaranteed investment certificates, we have a short term investment with which we feel we have some discretionary flexibility. It is those funds that we want to use for wheelchair accessibility and siding. I don't feel it appropriate to produce actual financial statements that would be available on the internet, but if any member wants a detailed accounting of the church's finances, simply contact either Frank Loomer or me.

As a reminder, we still need committee volunteers for the Membership Committee.

Additionally, although it may seem a long way off, at next year's Annual General Meeting, we are going to need a couple more people to serve on the Board of Trustees. Andrea is the chair of the Nomination Committee and would be happy to hear from anyone interested in serving on the Board.

The **Season of Lights** is upon us. May you get some of what you want, and most of what you need.

Cheers,

Fred Webster

### *The Fundy Wave*

hits the shore every month but July and August

**Deadline for January – Friday December 18th**

**Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Saint John**

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