



**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 a.m. 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 New Year!***

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**#1 Sunday Services in January – Time 10.30 a.m.**

**Jan. 3. :** Coordinators: Jennifer Loomer & Connie Humphrey

**Fire Communion**

Come celebrate the first service of 2010 as we join together in this communal service. Come ready to let go of the concerns and disquiet from the past year and be ready to let in your intentions for the year to come. This communion gives us an opportunity to deeply and powerfully connect and transform in an environment of ritual, music, voice and fire.

**Jan. 10th.** Coordinator: Kathleen

Our friend Rev. Ray Drennan will be speaking on

**"Thoughts of Wisdom for the New Year".**

If you are new to our church and have not had the opportunity to hear Ray speak, please don't miss this service. Ray is a dynamic speaker and ALWAYS delivers a thought provoking sermon.

**Jan. 17.** Coordinator: Connie. Leaders: Caroline & Tony. Discussion Sunday

**“Human nature, Mr. Alnutt, is what we are put into this world to rise above.” African Queen, the movie**

Using the text **Evensong**, Tony and Caroline will explore the topic: Being Human: What limits do we encounter? “Listening is at the core of Evensong. It focuses on paying attention to people. It offers people the opportunity to listen, speak of what matters to them, and be with one another in respectful ways. Listening solidifies relationships and is a foundation for community.”

. Come and join in, or just come and listen. Either way, you will enjoy it!

**Jan. 24.** Coordinator: Kathleen. Minister – Rev. Elizabeth Bailey.

Details will be sent out when available.

**Jan. 31.** Coordinator: Joanne. Presenter Clyde Wray.

Author of **“Bridges We can Walk Across”**

Clyde Wray is a director, playwright and poet. He will present readings from his works.

## **#2 Editorial**

### **December at our church**

Did you notice the Christmas trees decorated with ornaments from all of us? Did you notice the wreaths on the wall? This happened because of caring members donating time and talent to beautify our sanctuary.

Did you come to the Blue Christmas service? It was a gentle and loving time to listen and to reflect. It was created to give voice to those of us who have suffered loss in our lives. And then downstairs there was a warm and welcome table to sit at and meet our friends. This happened because of caring members donating time and talent to lift our spirits.

Did you sing carols and hear readings and did you notice our children and youth? How well they sang and played the piano and how warmly the chalice was lit! Did you sing “Silent Night” as we lit our candles on December 20, the Winter Solstice night? The magic was created by our caring volunteers who wrote the script, practiced carols, played the piano, read, welcomed, and made the magic possible. Did you notice the flood lights? Did you partake in the feast of sweets, punch and cider set beautifully as in a family dining room? Wasn’t it delightful?

Everything that happened this December happened because of dedicated church members. Let’s say THANK YOU with joy and gratitude.

And this Sunday, we are in store for another wonderful service when we look at “The Many Faces of New Years.”

We are fortunate indeed!

### **#3 Women at the Well**

Women at the Well will meet Mon. Jan 11/10 from 6:00pm - 8:00pm. Potluck supper followed by discussion

### **#4 JAN 2010 – Work List**

DATE	WELCOMER	REFRESHMENTS
Jan 03	George A	Judith P & Joanne B
Jan 10	Jack C	Connie H & Fred W
Jan 17	Joanne B	Phil J & Andrea J
Jan 24	Carol M	Hendrien K & Doug D
Jan 31	Caroline S	Tony S & George L

### **ROMERO HOUSE**

Jan 17 – Judith P, David P, Andrea J, Jenny L, Frank L

### **#5 Healthy Congregations**

Membership is an issue that Odin Heller takes very seriously and suggests the board should as well. She writes that the board needs to look at the requirements for becoming a member and discourages the practice of simply signing the membership book. This is a dangerous practice especially when the church owns property.

Check out Churchworks by Anne Odin Heller and learn more about healthy congregation. There is a copy in the CUC library at our church. In Churchworks, ( a well-body book for congregation) the brain is used as a metaphor for the church board, meaning this is where information comes in and is organized and decisions are made with the health of the body ( congregation) in mind.

Kathleen

### **#6 UUWORLD,**

The quarterly magazine, published in Boston by the Unitarian Universalist Association, is now renewing subscriptions at the start of the new year. UUWORLD used to cost \$31US (+exchange) to Canadian readers. But in the last year, the Canadian rate has been cut to \$20 US, a figure that compares much more favourably with the rate of \$14 in the United States. In addition, the exchange rate on the US dollar is now much lower.

Send your subscription to UU World Circulation, 25 Beacon St. Boston MA 02108 by cheque, money order or credit card – Visa or Mastercard. Email – [subscriptions@uua.org](mailto:subscriptions@uua.org)

UUWORLD comes out in March, June, September and November. Its major articles would be of interest to UU members and friends.

**#7 Poem** submitted by JvW

### **New Year**

What can be said in New Year rhymes,  
That's not been said a thousand times?  
The new years come, the old years go,  
We know we dream, we dream we know.  
We rise up laughing with the light,  
We lie down weeping with the night.  
We hug the world until it stings,  
We curse it then and sigh for wings.  
We live, we love, we woo, we wed.  
We wreath our prides, we sheet our dead.  
We laugh, we weep, we hope, we fear.  
And that's the burden of a year.  
Ella Wheeler Wilcox

### **#8 Museum Notes**

**Until March 2010 at NB Museum – Market Square**

**Thursdays, 6:30-8 pm, Night-at-the-Museum for Youth!**

YOUTH ages 10-13 can drop in for great experiences and explore amazing New Brunswick stuff. A different experience each Thursday! Cost: \$3.25 regular student admission (tax included). Consider buying a student year membership for only \$32!

### **#9 Human Rights Award**

#### **Woodstock girls' hockey team wins second human rights award**

In September, the Lady Thunder hockey team at Woodstock High School received the New Brunswick Human Rights award because the team members came to the defense of two players who disclosed they were gay. The young women refused to let players from other teams make insulting and taunting remarks about sexual orientation, and started the wearing of pins saying “No Homophobia”. The Woodstock hockey players also got parents and friends to support their gay team mates, and to wear the pins.

At the end of November, the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport named the Woodstock team as the recipient of its Grace Under Pressure award for 2009. This award most often goes to Olympic athletes.

## **#10 Letter from the President Congregational Growth**

The Board of Trustees did not meet in December - a sure sign that things are running smoothly and committees are on task! However, I would like to distribute this article from Linda Thomson, CUC Director of Congregational Services, that was received in the church's mail. I thought that it would be of interest to everyone, and include it for your information.

As you know, our opinions of how important it is to increase our numbers vary from one to another; some feel that it is essential, and is a sign of vibrancy of their faith, while others are more ambivalent, believing that 'seekers will eventually find us'. Admittedly, I find overt proselytizing distasteful, but am strongly in the camp that believes that we must be visible as an option for those who are searching for a liberal religious home that encourages and supports their personal spiritual journey. There are certainly other points of view that are equally valid.

Linda's article explores some of these diverse viewpoints. I find the table of the comparison of low-growth and high-growth congregations particularly interesting.

By the time you read this, it will likely be near the end of December, and I hope you have not been too frazzled by Consumer Christmas, nor by the flood of sentimentality and religious fundamentalism that bombard us this time of year. But when all is said and done, 'tis the season for forgiveness replenishment, hope and the possibility of new beginnings.

A new year awaits,

Fred

## **#11 Message from Linda Thomson Growing a Community**

When I talk about congregations with leaders I often hear about questions and anxiety regarding growth issues. "We've lost a few members." "We'd like to grow, and have tried a few things, but we're not having results." At this point I ask a few questions so that I can better understand what I'm being asked. "What do you mean by growth?" "Why do you want to grow?" "How do you measure growth?"

The answers I receive to these questions tell me a lot about next steps for the congregation we are discussing. Sadly some congregations are only interested in enough growth to maintain the status quo membership levels in the congregation, "I like a small congregation, this is a good size and I'm comfortable here" is, sadly, synonymous with saying "I've found the congregation and it's ok to close the door now!" Others are interested in being able to maintain their organization, and tell me that new members would help replenish their membership roles, adding new volunteers and new pledge units. This tells potential new members, "We are more interested in what you can do for us that in how we can serve you".

Of course congregations need at least some new members each year if they are going to be sustainable. Studies have shown that the average congregation has a normal annual membership loss of about 5%. So unless you are welcoming at least that percentage into new membership each year, you will actually be declining in overall membership.

However I'd like to encourage us to think beyond the 5% figure. Because if we don't, what we'll effectively be doing is keeping things to ourselves, and we'll be saying 'this is nice, but it's not really

important'. If we believed we'd found something really important, like a cure for the common cold, we'd be telling people about it and we'd be encouraging them to try it.

I think our congregations are that important!

If you share my belief in our congregations there are resources available to support yours as your leaders work to increasing its vibrancy and vitality.

There are some things we know that can help make visitors feel welcome including careful use of language (avoiding acronyms), an attractive and accessible building, members who strive to find the right balance when greeting visitors so that they feel genuinely welcomed and invited and sincere invitations to 'come again'. We need members who are willing to invite their friends to attend with them, and outreach programs that help people know a bit about us. And then when visitors do come we need to consider how we treat them. Do we encourage them to take a 'green' mug and then ignore them? The chart below compares low and high growth (vs. no growth) congregations on several indicators.

<b>Comparing Low Growth and High Growth Congregations on several welcoming &amp; hospitality indicators</b>	Low Growth Congregations	High Growth Congregations
Number of Visitors per month (as percentage of congregation)	10%	20%
Number of interactions with visitors on first visit	0-2	3+
Number of ways/roles offered, as ways to get involved, to visitors	27	55
Number of congregants who establish friendships with new members	2	7
Number of ways to communicate congregational events	3	9
Number of ways to explain and orient newcomers to congregation	2	6
How visitors are encouraged to become involved in events	Leave it up to visitor	Personal invitations
Percentage of second-time visitors likely to become members	21%	38%
Percentage of third-time visitors likely to become members	33%	55%

There is no magic solution that would help us sidestep the ongoing work of welcoming and hospitality. Some of these are easier to do in larger congregations, but some consideration of the material that is available and where necessary adaptations, will provide congregational leaders with a starting point to the

conversation. I encourage you to think a bit beyond your current comfort level – to a membership number that startles you a bit.

I believe our congregations are that important!

## #12 US News

### “Watershed Moment” in Washington DC

Mayor Adrian Fenty of the District of Columbia (DC) signed a marriage equality bill into law on Dec. 18. He signed the legislation at a public ceremony at **All Souls Unitarian Church** in Washington. All Souls Senior Minister Rob Hardies, who has served as co-chair of DC Clergy United for Marriage Equality, issued the following statement:

"The signing of this bill marks a watershed moment for human rights in the District of Columbia. No longer will gay and lesbian couples be denied the fundamental right to marriage in the US capital."

### Americans mix practices from different faiths, study finds

**New York (ENI).** People in the United States are increasingly mixing religious practices from different traditions, with many saying they attend religious services of another faith, while others embrace elements of Eastern or New Age beliefs.

A study, released on 9 December by the Washington-based Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, also found that almost half of those surveyed, 49 percent, said they had had some type of "religious or mystical experience - that is, a moment of religious or spiritual awakening". Slightly more than one-third, 35 percent, said that they "regularly" or "occasionally" attend religious services at more than one place. They said they sometimes attend services of a religious faith different from their own.

(ENI) Ecumenical News International offers religious news in French and English from Geneva

## #13 CUC Staffing Changes.

Jennifer Dickson, executive director of the Canadian Unitarian Council, has announced two administrative changes in the CUC staff. Here is part of what she said:

**Linda Thomson**, who has served as Director of Regional Services since 2002, and as Associate Executive Director since 2004, now has a new position title: **Director of Congregational Services**. This change reflects a philosophical position and a practical reality. Philosophically, the CUC is an association of member congregations. Our supports and services are developed and delivered with the vitality of congregations in mind. And I feel that to describe her position as **Director of Congregational Services** more accurately describes the work she does, working with congregational leaders. Of course some services will be delivered at cluster, regional and national level, but the prime focus of her portfolio is still that of the needs and interests of congregations. .

**Phil Strapp**, who manages CUC finances, does the bookkeeping, contributes to policy making regarding all financial aspects of the organization, will now hold the title **Director of Finance**. This better represents the level of his responsibility within CUC and to the congregations we serve.

Currently plans are being implemented to add a Director of Youth Services to the staff, and other portfolios will be considered as budget allows. More and more we find it beneficial to structure along lines of expertise rather than geography.

As the new Executive Director, I am pleased to have Linda continue as Associate Executive Director, and am grateful for the work she and Phil covered while the Board initiated its recruitment and selection process for the Executive Director position. Linda will now be able to renew her focus on providing supports to congregations and Phil will continue to focus on the excellent bookkeeping and financial management his position requires.

#### **#14 Youth and Adult O.W.L.**

Youth O.W.L. - The first session of Youth O.W.L. will be held on the weekend of the 9th - 10th of Jan, 2010 in Saint John. This is for ages 12 - 18, it will be split into two groups, junior youth and senior youth. Youth from Saint John, Fredericton, and Halifax will be attending. Instructors will also be from all 3 congregations. The cost is \$20 per weekend to cover the cost of food & etc. If you wish your child to attend, please send an email to Steve McCavour at [samcc@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:samcc@nbnet.nb.ca). We will be looking for volunteers to help with hosting duties such as meals and night watch.

Adult O.W.L. - George DeMille and Alison Calvern will be leading the Our Whole Lives program for Adults in the new year, and the first session will be on January 13th at 7pm, 545 Sandy Point Road. For more information on the O.W.L. program see <http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/ourwhole/>

#### **#15 CRE**

There will be children's RE on January 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. The curriculum is "We Believe" and there will be child minding on the remaining Sundays in January.

#### **#16 Choir Practice**

There will be two practices in January. Details will be sent out later.

#### **#17 Ministerial Search Committee**

We continue to read and record the Congregational Survey responses and we are taking time to "enjoy the in between" as Rev. Ray Drennan advised. Consultation with church members will be our next step. Look for details in the February Fundy wave. Caroline

#### **#18 Note from Mexico**

Lawmakers in Mexico City have become the first in Latin America to legalise gay marriage. City legislators passed the bill 39-20, and the mayor of Mexico City is expected to approve it.

#### **#19 Hazen-White PALS**

On December 16th, I had the opportunity to share in one of the best non-family experiences of the season. I was invited to a Christmas concert & dinner at Hazen White/St. Francis School to

show appreciation to all the Partners Assisting Local Schools (PALS). To be honest, the invitation came to the church, but as the mail wasn't opened until the deadline and it had to be RSVP-ed straight away, I gladly volunteered.

There were the usual children's presentations and songs, but the surprise was a full turkey dinner with, as they say, all the fixin's! As well, the tables were all decorated, complete with "crackers" so that everyone received a noise maker and a party hat. Additionally, every student received a Santa gift, and they were all served at their table by school staff and volunteers.

All told there were about 200 people in the gym.

When I asked one of the Teachers where the food and gifts had come from, it was hinted that there were anonymous PALS donors. I don't know who they were, but I have my suspicions! In any case, the children were delighted, and it was great to see representatives from various PALS, the Saint John Police Force, a member of City Council, UNBSJ students, and other friends and helpers.

The teachers - lead by Principal Jennifer Carhart - are to be commended for their efforts.

Frankly, I'm amazed and humbled by them.

It's so gratifying that the school did not close, and is thriving.

Before I left, I had a brief conversation with the new PALS co-ordinator, Cameron Badger, to confirm that UUCSJ intends to continue to be an active PALS of HWSF School. We will hear more in the new year.

Fred

## #20 Museum Freebies!

### Happy Holidays from the New Brunswick Museum!

#### Our Holiday Gift to You: Free Admission Dec. 29, 30, 31

Celebrate the holiday season with a free visit to the New Brunswick Museum Dec. 29, 30, and 31 – our holiday gift to you! Bring friends & family to story-telling, interactive exhibitions, creative activities, and music for all ages! **Free admission, noon to 5 pm.**

Enjoy fine art from New Brunswick's artists. Last chance to view **Portraits: New Brunswick Painters, 1970-2000; William Forrestall**; and from the **Know Your Own Artists series - Beyond the Garden Path: Tapestry Art by Susan Vida Judah.**

Also **SMILE – The Tooth and Nothing But the Tooth**; an interactive exhibition *co-produced by the Centre d'exposition de l'Université de Montréal and the Exhibition Production Centre of the Musée de la nature et des sciences in Sherbrooke.*

**Museum closed Dec.24, 25, 26.**

New Brunswick Museum Exhibition Centre, Market Square, Saint John.

#### The Fundy Wave

hits the shore every month but July and August

**Deadline for February – Wednesday January 20<sup>th</sup>.**

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