

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg



The Communicator

December 2020



Religious Exploration begins at 10:00 am for children and Sunday Services 10:30 am for church service

The theme for December is Silence

All services are streamed via Zoom; please check our website for the link/dial-in information: uuwinnipeg.mb.ca

December 6, 2020

I Can't Keep Quiet

*Service Leaders: Rev. Meghann Robern
Service Coordinator: Marian Siemens*

This Sunday is the anniversary of the École Polytechnique massacre. We will remember the lives that were lost, and contemplate how to prevent future such tragedies by committing to making our shared values real in the world for everyone, not just ourselves.

December 13, 2020

The Question Box

*Service Leader: Nicole McKay
Service Coordinator: Steve Lennon*

Questions clarify for us our understanding, cause us to think, and can reveal for us pathways for further inquiry. Asking questions is a spiritual practice that asks us to be vulnerable by admitting we don't have all the answers as we engage in our free and responsible search for truth and meaning. This Sunday, we are taking your questions and responding to them from our virtual pulpit with a starting point for further dialogue.

December 20, 2020

The Return of the Light

*Service Leaders: Rev. Meghann Robern,
Andrea James, Nicole McKay
Service Coordinator: M.C. Ziegler*

The turning of the year has brought us back around to the longest night in the northern hemisphere, and the slow return of light to our lives. Come celebrate with us through story and song as we say thank you and farewell to the season of darkness, and turn to our shared future together.

Thursday, December 24, 2020

6:30pm Christmas Eve

*Service Leaders: Rev. Meghann Robern,
Nicole McKay, Andrea James, P.J.
Buchan*

Service Coordinator: Dylan Fijal
Folks of all ages are invited to join us for our Christmas Eve service. It's based on traditional Lessons & Carols but, as always, will have Unitarian Universalist twists! We'll close with our long-standing tradition of singing Silent Night together by candlelight with our virtual choir. Please bring your own candle—combustible or electric—along with any holiday food or drink to celebrate the coming of Christmas together.

December 27, 2020

"Searching for Release: A Contemplative Service on Letting Go of Expectations"

Service Leader and Coordinator: M. C. Ziegler

A new year begins with a mix of hopes and expectations and ends much the same. 2020 has been a year of challenge in letting go of the expectations we began with and finding new ways of relating and being. Join us in this contemplative and meditative service of exploring the letting go of expectations and living in appreciation of the gift of the present moment.

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The deadline for the **January 2021** Communicator is **Monday, December 21st, 2020**

From the Minister's Study

by The Reverend Meghann Robern



Another year has come and gone, my beloveds, and what a year it has been. Our monthly

theme for December is silence, and while the softness of the snow-covered earth is ideal for engaging a contemplative life during the winter months, I also fear the hard side silence -- of unintended, unwanted isolation, especially as we continue to navigate this global pandemic.

As I was struggling to write this month's column, to offer you kind and comforting words that I myself would want to hear in this season, I came upon an article written this week by Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex. I don't often turn over my entire column to another writer, but sometimes, another's words are so good that I don't feel I could improve upon them without holding myself up as the pinnacle of arrogance. So I offer to you this excerpt from the Duchess's editorial.

In gratitude and faith,
Rev. Meghann

When I was in my late teens, I sat in the back of a taxi zipping through the busyness and bustle of Manhattan. I looked out the window and saw a woman on her phone in a flood of tears. She was standing on the sidewalk, living out a private moment

very publicly. At the time, the city was new to me, and I asked the driver if we should stop to see if the woman needed help. I remember him telling me. "Don't worry, somebody on that corner will ask her if she's OK."

Now, all these years later, in isolation and lockdown, grieving the loss of a child, the loss of my country's shared belief in what's true, I think of that woman in New York. What if no one stopped? What if no one saw her suffering? What if no one helped? I wish I could go back and ask my cabdriver to pull over. This, I realize, is the danger of siloed living — where moments sad, scary or sacrosanct are all lived out alone. There is no one stopping to ask, "Are you OK?"

So [...] as we plan for a holiday unlike any before — many of us separated from our loved ones, alone, sick, scared, divided and perhaps struggling to find something, anything, to be grateful for — let us commit to asking others, "Are you OK?" As much as we may disagree, as physically distanced as we may be, the truth is that we are more connected than ever because of all we have individually and collectively endured this year.

We are adjusting to a new normal where faces are concealed by masks, but it's forcing us to look into one another's eyes — sometimes filled with warmth, other times with tears. For the first time, in a long time, as human beings, we are really seeing one another.

*Are we OK?
We will be.*

Orange Appeal

Brian Klowak and the food bank volunteer team



Because of the generosity of our congregants, our church food bank has

been able to gift boxes of Christmas oranges to our food bank clients every year—a tradition started by June Gislason. We buy these oranges at cost from a local supplier using funds donated by our church members and friends.

During the pandemic, food bank clients come once every four weeks instead of once every two weeks, in order to reduce crowding and to allow more people access to food. We will hand out boxes of oranges for four weeks in December, starting December 3rd.

We hope you are able to continue with your kindness during this challenging covid19 year. To donate money for this Orange Appeal, please send an e-transfer to office@uuwinnipeg.mb.ca, and put "Orange Appeal" in your comment section. You can also mail a cheque to the church, with "Orange Appeal" in the memo line.

Thank you for your support!

Living Our Faith

by Andrea James, Director of Lifespan Faith Development



This fall has been a heavy learning period for me, meaning I've taken a few trainings and attended two confer-

ences since August. I love learning and get pretty excited about whatever it is I'm focusing on. So it is with the course I'm finishing up now: *Dimensions of Faith Development*.

I teach about two models of faith development in our *How We Grow* program: one created by developmental

psychologist [James Fowler](#), the other by Unitarian Universalist minister and religious edu-

cator [Rev. Dan Harper](#) (links take you to their models). Both of these focus on how an *individual* grows in faith.

Religious educator and UUA Congregational Life staff Natalie Briscoe has developed a new lens, one which *can* be used at an individual level and corresponds to Fowler and Harper's models (among others), but which provides us with a view of congregation-level faith development.

Briscoe has us moving, individually and collectively, from the beginning - building trust - through connecting heavily with our stories and building community, then entering a period of deconstruction. Sometimes people leave during this phase; other times we deepen our connections and grow together. When that happens, we become part of building Unitarian Universalism and possibly - though it's rare - move toward build-

ing the world we dream about.

This lens is helpful for all of us in leadership within the congregation: it helps us understand what kind of support is needed when, which programs to offer; and who might be best suited for which roles within our community.

But I'm quite interested in the "Building Narrative" dimensions. There are two of them, they play such a key role in our development. We learn the stories that help us build our identity as UUs, and then stories that help us build community with others who identify as UU. These core stories need to be repeated over and over (let's say, annually) so that

people don't just hear and appreciate them once, they learn them by heart.

What are our core sto-

ries? Which stories - like the annual telling of the nativity story - do we collectively know by heart? Which stories could be told in any UU fellowship (stories about love, justice, stewardship of the earth), and which are about us (how we came to be, what struggles we overcame), in particular?

I would love to hear your answer to those questions! And I'll be thinking about them myself. During worship I'll be moving toward a balance of stories that are new and provide variety, and those that "sing the song of our people". In fact, since everything we do is faith development, hymns serve this function as well. We literally do sing the songs of our people over and over, so we'll begin to do the same with our stories.

In faith,
Andrea
dlfd@uuwinnipeg.mb.ca

Faith Development Notes

At All Times: [register children for Religious Exploration \(RE\)](#)

December

- 1 *Elders Reflections*, 11:30 am - 1:30 pm (1st Tuesdays)
December RE Packet will arrive by email around now
- 3 *Wellspring: Sources* with Andrea, 6:30-8:30 pm
Youth: *Cosmic Connections*, 8:00 pm
- 5 Covenant Group Facilitators' Group, 10:00-12:00 (1st Saturdays)
- 6 **RE - 10:00-10:20 am**
Youth: *Popcorn Theology*, 3:00-6:00 pm (1st Sundays) - [A Wrinkle in Time](#)
- 7 *Parents & Caregivers as Sexuality Educators*, 7:00-8:00 pm
- 8 2nd Tuesday Covenant Group, 9:30-11:30 am
- 9 2nd Wednesday Covenant Group, 6:00-8:00 pm
- 10 *Wellspring: Sources* with Rev. Meghann, 2:00-4:00 pm
Youth: *Cosmic Connections*, 8:00 pm
- 13 **RE - 10:00-10:20 am**
Youth: *A Chorus of Faiths* (2nd Sundays), 3:00 pm
- 14 *Parents & Caregivers as Sexuality Educators*, 7:00-8:00 p.m.
- 15 3rd Tuesdays Covenant Group, 7:00-9:00 pm
- 16 3rd Wednesday Covenant Group, 9:00-11:00 am
- 17 *Wellspring: Sources* with Andrea, 6:30-8:30 pm
Youth: *Cosmic Connections*, 8:00 pm
- 18 3rd Fridays Covenant Group, 9:30-11:30 am
Possible date for [POP adults group](#), with Debby - 1:30-2:30 p.m. (usually 4th Fridays)
- 20 **RE - 10:00-10:20 am**
Youth: *Super Group*, 5:00 pm begins (3rd Sundays)
- 24 Christmas Eve Service at 6:30 pm
- 27 **NO RE** today
- 28 4th Mondays Covenant Group, 7:00-9:00 pm

Board Notes

by Lauren Bailey, President



Hello everyone,

Thank you to all who attended the Autumn Financial Meeting in November. One of the hallmarks of a healthy church

is the engagement of its members, especially for financial documentation over Zoom! Every time we host meetings or information sessions, I'm heartened with the reception and participation we get in return.

The Mission and Vision team is also pleased with the discussion coming into the vision@uuwinnipeg.mb.ca mailbox. You have given us a lot to think about as we work on the next steps. If you want to join us in word smithing, or if you have a thought you want to share, email the team.

Over the next few months, the board is hosting an amnesty for church items you may have in your homes that you kept forgetting to bring back, and now can't. Documentation from committees you aren't on any more, drawings and materials that we need for our records, unneeded church keys - we'll take

them all! Please email me at the address below and I will arrange a time to do a socially-distanced pick up inside the city, or we can meet at the church parking lot, if that's easier for you. Please give a quick look around your home and see if there's anything there belonging to the church that you don't need in your personal space.

In the upcoming year, we want to feature the good work of our committees and working groups both on Sunday mornings and in our all-church emails. Sharing this work helps us stay connected as a congregation. Committee Chairs - email me at the address below with a short summary and some pictures (if applicable), and we will help you shout our good deeds for everyone to hear!

I'm looking forward to this holiday season, and wish you and your families the best. Staying apart is so hard, but hopefully, next year's celebration will allow us all to be together again.

Your board meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 18:30 on Zoom. Are you interested in attending? The meetings are open to all church members - email me to get the Zoom link. Exceptions for some topics will occur for confidentiality reasons.

I want to hear from you. You can contact me at president@uuwinnipeg.mb.ca.

Faith Development Programs

by Andrea James, Director of Lifespan Faith Development



Transgender Inclusion in Congregations

2nd and 4th Thursdays, choose between 2:00-4:00 pm **or** 6:00-8:00 pm

February 11 to May 27, 2021

1st hour: video lecture

2nd hour: discussion

Facilitator Andrea James, with Rev. Mykal Slack and Zr. Alex Kapitan on video. For more information and to register by February 1, 2021 [visit our website under the Learning tab. \(uuwinnipeg.mb.ca\)](http://www.uuwinnipeg.mb.ca)

Please visit the church website and look under the Learning tab for much more information about all of these programs and more, and to register. All programs and events will be held on the Zoom platform.

June Gislason

by Gini Martin

A Candle to Remember

"It is a curious error to suppose that you can carry on effectively a great liberal tradition while remaining ignorant or almost ignorant of the beliefs and achievements of the people who have handed that tradition on to you." *Harry Meserve*



June Mcknight lived on the family farm, completed her education in Homewood, Manitoba and moved

to Winnipeg where she earned both her teacher's and principal's certificate. Her first teaching position was at Steep Rock in 1940. Later many happy times with friends and family were spent at the family cottage there.

At Steep Rock June met Thor Gislason, whose family was Unitarian. The couple was married in 1943 by Rev. Phillip Peterson, the long-time minister. In 1954 with their four children they moved to Winnipeg.

June continued to teach and earned her bachelor's degree in 1975 at the age of 54. A dedicated teacher, she was recognized by the

Canadian College of Teachers in 1981 as "Teacher of the Year" in Manitoba. She developed and piloted a number of innovative programs which resulted in her being described as "The teacher's measure of a teacher."

June was a long-time member our Church. She contributed to the Religious Education Program. Her most treasured contribution was the founding and managing of the Winnipeg Harvest sponsored food bank, that she began in 1991, as our Centennial year project, at the Banning Street church. She fought for the food bank to continue in the new building at 603. The program continues to this day. She was concerned about social justice and the rights of all, but especially the rights of children. She worked to ensure that the families with children received milk.

June began the "orange appeal" program funded annually with donations from church members and friends. In December, each family who attends the Harvest depot at

the church receives oranges – a gift from the congregation.

June actively participated in Harvest until she became too ill after a stroke in 2011. Her philosophy is still very much acknowledged in the running of the food bank, which is one of welcoming, mutual respect, and involving individuals in the food bank operations. Devoted to Canadian literature, June was an active member of a book group and continued to participate until her last year. She loved and had a broad knowledge of poetry. She was also devoted to her garden and flowers.

In 1998, June received the Unitarian Social Justice Award for her contributions.

June set an example for all of us with her dedication to social justice principles and her example of living her beliefs. She is missed but the Harvest Depot at the church continues as her legacy.

“Caring” is our goal!

by Bonnie Thiessen, Pastoral Care Coordinator



It’s hard to imagine but next month **Our Caring Community Email Group** will be 3 1/2 years old! I know that over the years some

folks have misplaced their Caring Community Email address. In case you’ve been looking for it, here it is! our-caring-community@google-groups.com

 You may want to add it to your addresses so that it’s easy to find.

It’s been wonderful to have this connection, especially during this Covid pandemic. And, no doubt, it will be even more important to us during the deep of winter. Our email group helps us reach out to one another in so many practical, caring, and supportive ways.

We can:

- “Light a candle” for any joy, sadness, milestone or other personal concern.
- Ask for personal help or support.
- Offer practical help to others.
- Send a message to the group.
- Reply to the whole group.
- Reply directly and privately to any message.

Some of you may be surprised to learn that, although a message may be good and important, not all messages support the simple **“Caring” mandate** of our group. For this reason, the following kinds of messages are not accepted.

- Forwards
- Fundraising messages
- Political messages
- Theological discussions
- Messages that contain 3rd party information without permission
- Messages that lack clarity or key information

Happy Holidays to All!



CUC Upcoming Events



Black Lives Matter Round Table Series “And My Heart Starts Pounding”: Undoing systemic racism – find, notice, listen, show up fully, love — and repeat
Wednesday, December 2, 5:00 pm PT | 6:00 pm MT | 7:00 pm CT | 8:00 pm ET | 9:00 pm AT

How Shall We Gather? Hybrid In-Person & Zoom Gatherings, Saturday, December 5, 2020, 10 am PT| 11 am MT| Noon CT| 1 pm ET| 2 pm AT| (3 hours)

Rising Together: UU Youth and Emerging Adults of Colour - Saturday, December 19; 1 pm PT |2 pm MT |3 pm CT |4 pm ET |5 pm AT (90 minutes)

For Youth (14-19) and emerging adults (18-24) of colour

Check the CUC website for further information.

Who’s Who

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The **deadline** for the **January 2021** issue is: **Monday, December 21st, 2020**

The opinions of the authors are their own and do not necessarily represent those of the Board of Directors, the editorial board, the newsletter editor, or the church minister.

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