



Capital Unitarian Universalist Congregation

The Capital Letter

VICTORIA, BC

2017

Beannacht ("Blessing")

On the day when
 the weight deadens
 on your shoulders
 and you stumble,
 may the clay dance
 to balance you.
 And when your eyes
 freeze behind
 the grey window
 and the ghost of loss
 gets in to you,
 may a flock of colours,
 indigo, red, green,
 and azure blue
 come to awaken in you
 a meadow of delight.
 When the canvas frays
 in the currach of thought
 and a stain of ocean
 blackens beneath you,
 may there come across the waters
 a path of yellow moonlight
 to bring you safely home.
 May the nourishment of the
 earth be yours,
 may the clarity of light be yours,
 may the fluency of the ocean be
 yours,
 may the protection of the
 ancestors be yours.
 And so may a slow
 wind work these words
 of love around you,
 an invisible cloak
 to mind your life.

~ John O'Donohue ~

Sunday Services in April

April 2nd Barbara Freeman "The Devil of Being an Angel: Life Lessons from Sponsoring LGBTQ Newcomers to Canada"

Drawing on her experiences and those of other people who help LGBTQ refugees, Barbara Freeman reflects on the nature of compassion, mutual respect, patience and cooperation with newcomers, and among their sponsors and donors. The devil of being an angel is often in the details.

Children's Program



April 9th Janet Vickers "Infinite Power"

Janet Vickers will read from her second trade book of poems Infinite Power (Ekstasis 2016). Infinite power, in her eyes "is not a zero sum game but a journey / a stone thrown in a lake". The danger of our age is that we have lost contact with that power, made it something to possess like a personal bank account. In writing these poems she hopes for a reconnection to that sacred universal relationship.

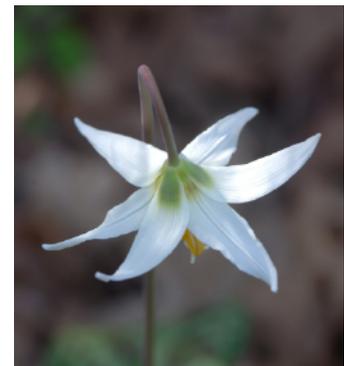
Children's Program



April 16th Kimberly Bramadat "Flower Communion: exchange of love and synergy"

Honoring the UU flower communion, from 1923 by the Reverends Norbert and Maja Capek to our present day exchange of love and synergy.

Children's Program



April 23rd and April 30th on page 2

All services are held Sundays at 10:00 a.m. at The James Bay New Horizons Centre, 234 Menzies Street, Victoria, BC. Child care is provided free of charge with our Children's program.



Board Notes

April 23rd Lillie Lentz “Earth Day: Places on the Map and Places in my Mind.”

It is good to celebrate. We celebrate our contributions to the Earth and the Earth's contributions to us. Let us explore the inherent worth and dignity of all things; Compassion in relationships; and the interconnectedness of all existence.

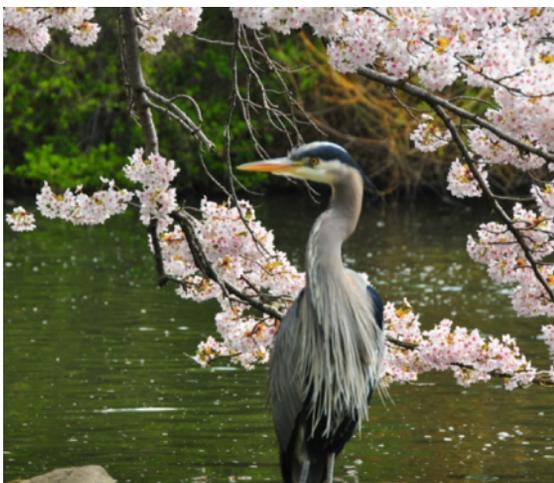
Children's Program



April 30th Murray Enkin “Myth from the Ice Age to Mickey Mouse”

Myths make the glue that has held humankind together since the Agricultural Revolution. Do the myths of today really, really, differ from the myths of then?

Children's Program



Board Report -

With the arrival of spring, Capital has recently gotten down to some annual housekeeping tasks. First was the all-important Annual General Meeting earlier this month and much of it was devoted to passing motions to bring us into compliance with the new BC Societies Act. The board is so grateful for the hours and hours of work devoted to the study and interpretation of this by our co-ordinator Amanda who virtually made it seem a cakewalk.

Indeed gratitude seemed to be a principal theme of the AGM as we thanked Peter Scales on his retirement as lay chaplain for his many years of service to Capital and the community at large. Anyone wishing to consider this important position would benefit from a conversation with Amanda or Dana on her upcoming return. Indeed, we doubly thank Peter as he retires from the board as well after years of service with it. This past year we initiated the presentation of Life Membership certificates and we now have two more names to add to that list in Alan Dawson and Elizabeth Atchison whose long service in so many capacities has added so much to our congregational life.

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Murray Enkin's Credo - Slow down

Quotations and paraphrases from *Homo Deus* by Yuval Harari

The Neanderthals did not have to worry about business cycles or national politics. Their progress was measured in thousands of years. Today, our attempts to upgrade *Homo sapiens* are likely to change the world beyond recognition in this century. Scientific and technological developments are moving at a far faster rate than most of us can grasp. More and more organizations, corporations, and governments are taking the quests for longevity, happiness, and godlike powers very seriously.

Insurance companies, pension funds, and health systems are already aghast at the jump in life expectancy. People are living longer than expected, and there is not enough money to pay for their pensions and medical treatment. Experts are suggesting that we raise the retirement age and restructure the job market. Many people think we have to slow down our racing rate of change; the trouble is, no one knows how. The experts are all specialists, in such fields as medical technology, artificial intelligence, enormous data analyses, whatever. No one is capable of connecting the dots, and seeing the big picture. No one can predict how the global economy will look in ten years. Since no one understands the system, no one can slow it down.

What is even worse, the modern economy needs constant and indefinite growth in order to survive. If growth ever stops, our economy may not settle down to some cosy equilibrium. It may fall to pieces, and our society with it. An economy built on everlasting growth needs endless projects.

Could we not settle for longevity and bliss, and put aside the quest for super-human powers? Probably not. When you find a drug or a treatment to stop memory loss in older people, why not use it to improve the memory of the young? There is no sharp line between healing and up-grading.

Where should we stop? It is a classic slippery slope. Genetic engineering begins with parents whose genetic profile puts their children at high risk of a serious genetic disease. We can now perform *in vitro* fertilization, and test the DNA of the fertilized egg. If everything is in order all is well and good, but if the DNA test discovers the dreaded mutations, the embryo can be destroyed. Why should we do this only for lethal genes? Why should we not use the same techniques for other suboptimal genes, like, for example, for stupidity, or for obesity. Who would let his or her child suffer from any of these? If we carried this on for a few generations, we could easily end up with a lot of super-humans (or a creepy dystopia).

Anyone could carry some harmful mutation, or less-

than optimal alleles in their DNA. Sexual reproduction is a lottery. And while you are at it, why not give your child a little push. Life is hard and challenging even for healthy people. Wouldn't it be nice if your little girl had a stronger-than-normal immune system, or above average memory, or a sunny disposition? And even if you wouldn't want this, for your own child, what if your neighbors were doing it for theirs? Would you let your child lag behind? Once you achieve a momentous breakthrough, you cannot restrict its use to healing, and forbid its use for up-grading.

Of course humans can, and do, limit their use of new technologies. The eugenic movement fell from favor after the Second World War. Trade in human organs is both possible and lucrative, but so far has remained peripheral. Atomic warfare has been possible for 80 years, and has not been used since Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Precisely because we have some choice regarding the use of new technologies, it is important to think of the possible unwanted effects. We would be better off understanding what is happening, and make up our minds about them before they make up our minds for us.

Harari makes it clear that these technologies would not be used by everyone in the twenty first century. For most people, they would play a minor, if any, role. Billions of humans in developing countries and seedy neighborhoods will continue to suffer from poverty, illness, and violence, even as the elites reach for eternal youth and god-like powers. This seems patently unjust, but those living in palaces have always had different agendas from those living in shacks, and this is not likely to change in this century.

He stresses that he is making only a historical prediction, not a political manifesto. Aiming at immortality and bliss may be a big mistake. History is full of big mistakes. And history is often shaped by exaggerated hopes. His predictions are less a prophecy than a way of discussing our present choices.

(Continued on page 4)





Board report cont'd and News

(Board report - Continued from page 2)

We also expressed thanks to the many volunteers who help make Capital run so smoothly. It's quite astonishing to see the relatively large number of positions capably filled as well as the fact that new members continue to bring us energy and commitment.

Finally, the board members were thanked for their past service and were joined for the new year by Alan Dawson, Cathy Baker and Dana Seaborn. At the first board meeting, Mike Riess became our new Chairperson, Frank Bowie Secretary and Rita Wittman mercifully remains Treasurer to continue her financial wizardry on behalf of Capital.

Going forward this year, we can all anticipate another great year for the "Little Congregation That Could."

Frank Bowie for the Board



Faye Mogensen giving her homily on March 19th



The next Pub Night is Friday April 21st

Location TBA - check your Order of Service,
congregational emails or speak to Karen
250 920-6042



(Murray's Credo – continued from page 3)

The processes of human development react to our predictions. It is a paradox of knowledge, in that once we see a likely looming effect we can act to modify or prevent it. Knowledge is of no use if it does not change behavior. But knowledge that changes behavior quickly modifies or obviates its consequence. The more we know, the less we can predict.

Centuries ago, human knowledge increased slowly, so politics and economies changed slowly too.

Now our knowledge is increasing at breakneck speed. Theoretically we should understand the world better, but the very opposite is happening.

We have no idea how the world will look in fifty years. Once we say this out loud, we can begin to think of alternatives.



Volunteer Coordinator News

Hi Everyone,

Thanks to Amanda and our Capital Letter, I can tell you that I am pleased to take on this task of Volunteer Coordinator.

My goal is to help ALL of us to have a task which we take turns at, approximately once a month, with pleasure.

I think we can all find it rewarding to do something which furthers the health of our community so we continue to benefit in a spiritual and emotional way. We are belonging!

So, will you help me by filling in the new skills and interest sheet. You will find it on top of the literature shelves (and on the reverse of this page). Also please note the manila folder marked with my name, "Elizabeth", in which you can place your completed form. You may have filled this in years ago but please do it again. Things change in our lives and we move on in our skills and interests.

By letting me know, I hope we will continue a long enjoyable time together in our special community. From the heart,

Elizabeth Atchison



Skills and Talents

Skills and Talents - Please return to Elizabeth 250 472-6262 or leave in the manilla envelop marked "Elizabeth" on the library bookshelf.

Name _____

Availability:

- Mornings
- Afternoons
- Evenings
- Too busy to be available

What, if any, Managerial/Leadership training have you had?

New Members - Skills & Talents Please mark your skills and/or interests:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Typing | <input type="checkbox"/> Diving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Musical Instrument | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clowning | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acting | <input type="checkbox"/> Dancing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Directing | <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calligraphy | <input type="checkbox"/> Singing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poster Making | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Painting | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knitting / crocheting | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weaving | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpting | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computers | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Woodworking | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Singing | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Filing | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computers | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletters | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Speaking | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archival work | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Events | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Theme Decorating | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Set-up & Clean-up of events | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greeting / Welcoming people | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching &/or Instructing | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boating | |