



Unitarian Fellowship of Kelowna

SIGNAL

February 2010 Newsletter

Upcoming Services

February 7th: “The Exploration and Journey to Freedom”

--**Guest speaker Jeff Thomlinson** Lay Coordinator: Lorri Simpson
Yoga/Spiritual Teacher Jeff Thomlinson will speak on "the exploration of freedom from the mind based on ancient traditional yoga teachings - a contemporary view of this ancient, individual exploration".

Our Community Sunday special offering will go to our Canadian Unitarian Council "Sharing our Faith" fund to help congregations with growth-related initiatives. All congregations in Canada are asked to contribute at this time of year. We have benefited from two grants in the past few years.

NOTE: Children and youth will meet at KDSCL one block south for the full hour with Lois and the “Caring for our World” team. Do plan to stay for our community lunch and conversation after the service

February 14th: “Eros Entangled” – Rev. Linda Weaver Horton

This Valentine's Day is a good time to reflect upon the conflicting messages and myths about love that are a part of our culture. "Love" means so many things: agape, eros, friendship, parental nurturance, compassion. Is it more about feeling or intention and commitment? What about love as a spiritual path? This Sunday Secret Pals are revealed! Please be there (or let Lois know if you cannot).

February 21th “Alternately Stone and Star”

Marilyn Raymond , Worship Committee

There is a creative tension between the heavy solid density of life and the vibrant, burning, intensity of life. Both darkness and light hold their gifts. Both depression and contentment hold their gifts. Finding balance is the journey and the goal. "now bounded, now immeasurable, it is alternately stone in you and star" ([Rainer Maria Rilke](#))

February 28th: "Who is Our Neighbour?" -- Rev. Linda Weaver Horton

What does it mean to "love your neighbour as yourself?" Who is our neighbour, anyway? How can we practice love and trust toward strangers and folks who are different from us? What about that strange teaching, "If someone takes your coat, give them your shirt as well?"

Minister's Musings: Your own Wise Words

How do we envision a caring covenant with one another? At a service last month, many of you contributed your own thoughtful words about four qualities we presented as core to being together as a caring religious community.

I offer you some of your own words for reflection:

SHOW EACH OTHER RESPECT

We need to treat ourselves and others gently and mindfully; listening with attention and openness, to the best of our ability without judgment, knowing that all points of view have merit. We need to take time to breathe deeply and really hear the other, considering each others' opinions carefully and in good faith, assuming the best intentions and open to learning from others' perspectives. Every voice should be heard.

We need to seek to understand before seeking to be understood. Listen more, not interrupt; allow for the possibility that there may be more to the story behind someone's actions or words. Practice patience and compassion.

In times of disagreement we need to spend time trying to understand deeper needs and meanings, our own and others. We need to realize that we all struggle and are doing the best that we can at the moment, avoiding put downs or hurtful gossip, avoiding blame and choosing the most respectful interpretation when relationships get difficult. Gentle confrontation builds intimacy.

Include respect for the interconnected web of all existence. Consider how what we do will impact plants and animals as well as each other.

COMMUNICATE FOR UNDERSTANDING

Communication begins with an open mind and open heart. Listen and speak from your heart with gentle honesty. Be clear, non-judging and compassionate. Empty yourself of your own opinions, and concentrate on hearing others. Be accepting of other peoples' opinions and thoughts.

Speak less, listen more. Give your full attention when in a communication; listen empathetically. Be patient.

Think before you talk. Ask questions if something isn't clear and make clear requests of others. Question your own assumptions and seek the truth. Think about others' intended meanings, and presume their best intentions.

Look for subtle communication in the body language.

May we try to speak openly and honestly, knowing that we hold only one window into the heart of any issue, and will learn from each other's windows. Appreciate the courage it takes a person to speak their own truth when that may be difficult for others to hear. Be open to a new way of being, speaking, or behaving.

Be nonconfrontational, and choose the right time and place for more difficult communications.

In dialogue, be aware that we are each unique; expect discomfort at times, and be curious about where that comes from within. Feel the discomfort and welcome it along with curiosity about others' opinions and their source. Speak and write clearly with your audiences' point of view in mind. Speak slowly and clearly for the deaf.

PARTICIPATE WITH TRUST AND COMMITMENT

Trust is an attitude we take. We extend trust when we choose the "most respectful interpretation." Trust that we are all doing our best at this time. Everyone's situation is different, so try to imagine where the other person is coming from. Trust that we are each offering as much as we are able. Do your best, and look for the best outcome. Aim for transparency with compassion.

When we disagree, ask questions, and seek to understand, before rushing to conclusions. We need to feel free to say "no" to a request for involvement. Think things through. Listen. Be graceful and humble in the face of adversity.

We need to be mindfully present, sharing gentleness of spirit, genuine care and concern, so it "feels safe to be you." Share appreciation for important, positive milestones, even though we may not identify with them ourselves.

Take opportunities along with their inherent risk to deepen connection with others. Participate. Stay engaged. Risk being honest. Risk not being perfect. "Being ourselves is not always easy but I find it essential." Don't be afraid to speak up.

Only promise what you can do, and do what you promise. Follow through with stated commitments. Be realistic about your ability to participate time-wise

Forgive others and yourself when that trust and commitment is let down, but try again. Remember that work is required to practice these commitments; they entail responsibilities. Practice, practice, practice! Would that we all could do this as an everyday practice. And more hugs!

EXPRESS ENCOURAGEMENT AND APPRECIATION

Remember that everyone of all ages thrives better when they feel appreciated and look for opportunities for praise and thanks -- often & candidly. Be authentic. Invite one another to shine. Be inclusive -- there is something we can find to compliment in anyone.

Tell people when they do something you value -- something brave, funny, kind, insightful. Look for the positives. Catch people doing good things -- look for

them all the time – everywhere! Let others know! By words spoken— by written words and actions. Try to always see the good. Preface controversial statements with appreciative words.

Reach out with an open heart. Show appreciation for the “small stuff.” Acknowledge even small acts of kindness.

Try your best to recognize when someone needs encouragement. Encourage by offering support and deep listening. A kind word, a thank-you, a hug helps. Empower one another with connection. Reach out to those who are quiet. Smile a welcome. When appropriate, a gift of touch can be very welcome.

Express gratitude spontaneously to others for their contribution of kindness, time or efforts. Remember to say “thank you.” Remember to thank and encourage others, especially those doing “behind the scenes” help.

Try not to focus on our own hurt feelings or ego. Always give someone a second chance, everyone can and does change. Nurture compassion and forgiveness for self and others. Remember what it is like to struggle at something; also remember how good it feels to succeed.

We need to make our appreciation much more part of our true culture. and make unconditional love a daily practice for life.

* * * * *

These are your own wise words. Most often expressed was the idea of “**best possible interpretation**” that Marilyn reflected upon – and a call for patience with one another! These “best practices” are not easy, especially when we are busy trying to get tasks done. We can all use reminders from time to time. I see many acts of caring and welcome within our community. Yet a couple of folk did take this opportunity to express their sense of not feeling safe or welcomed here. As we distill your reflections into a brief covenant we can use as opening words at meetings, let’s commit ourselves to learning how to be in community even more skillfully. For what we practice here, we take with us into the wider world and all our relationships. This in not just about us; what we do here is one of our most important contributions to a safer and more caring world.

In Faith and Appreciation,
Rev. Linda

Children’s Program;

The Yellow group (3 or 4-7) continues with “Treasure Hunters.” They are looking at what they value in themselves and their relationships. The Green group (8-12+) will continue with Tools of Faith related to our seven Principles. They will move on to a new program on Buddhism in March. Greens and interested youth will visit the Jewish Temple on Jan. 31st. **Secret Pals** has been going well and Pals will be revealed to each other on Valentine’s Day.

Youth Program:

Youth are invited to be peer aides with either class. Denise and Desta received a letter of thanks from the Food Bank for the donations they collected in December. Desta has been elected to the BC Youth Adult Committee which plans regional activities.

Sunday, March 21st will be a vernal equinox intergenerational service. There will be a role for all children, but Rev. Linda will be looking for a few volunteers up for a couple of after-church practices as well.

President's Message:

As this church year is drawing to a close, your board is working on tying up some of the projects that have that have been on our agenda for several months.

The sub-committee who have been distilling the congregational input on the Covenant of Right Relations will be bringing their final draft to the board in February. By the time that you read this, many of you will have been part of a Listening Circle. The facilitators met with Marilyn Raymond and Rev. Linda on Thurs. Jan 14 and had the opportunity to experience the process and also give some feedback into the content.

I want to thank Marilyn, Louise McKenzie and Rev. Linda for all the work that they have put into this. As a result I think that our Fellowship will become a stronger unit with a clear sense of direction.

February 21 will be our Annual General Meeting and the agenda and committee reports will be available on February 7. For those of you who are unable to get to church on that date, the remaining copies will be mailed out on Feb. 8.

Your board has approved the 2010 balanced budget. This will be voted on at the AGM.

You will note that we have a new thermostat installed in the sanctuary. Our previous one did not seem to have the ability to return to its low temperature, once set at a higher one. I would like to thank David Hughes for his prompt response, getting and installing the new seven day thermostat. This too will save us many dollars. David has pointed out that the church is heated by forced air. So - if you put chairs on top of the vent and right against the wall, we get some very nice warm chairs, but not much heat for the building. After church, if the chairs can be stacked away from the wall, if they have to go over a vent that would be ok, but better still - leave the vents clear.

On a final note, we hear in the news daily of the ongoing devastations in Haiti, and I would like to thank all of you for your generous gifts on January 17.

I am proud to be a part of such a caring and generous Fellowship.

Namaste, Maggie N.

Green Sanctuary:

We envision a world in which all people make reverence, gratitude, and care for the living Earth central to their lives.

The fellowship is now in the third year of work as a Green Sanctuary Candidate, and we would like to hear from you. How has the process of becoming a Green Sanctuary affected your life? What have you learned or what have you changed by being involved in the process?

As one way of doing this, we are inviting you to submit articles for the newsletter, telling your story and sharing what you have learned or done to become more Earth honouring. This way we can learn from each other, and support each other.

Garnet Tanner has agreed to write the first article for the next newsletter.

As a Green Sanctuary Candidate, the fellowship is required to send an annual report to the UU Ministry for Earth. In spite of challenges, the fellowship accomplished a lot in our second year. Here is a summary of our accomplishments:

The projects, which are the tools we use to learn to be more Earth honouring, are ongoing. This is what we have done so far:

IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1. Simonne spoke at a Philosopher's Café about the work of Joanna Macy.
2. The children's RE curriculum has had a significant number of Earth honouring activities.

WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION

3. Worship services have featured Earth honouring topics.
4. An Earth Day worship service was held.

SUSTAINABLE LIVING/ENERGY

10. -Building Future Teams explored possible Green Building practices/materials to include when developing the church property.

-Changing our linear waste cycle to a closed loop system to create ZERO

WASTE was explored by:

- A worship service was followed by a composting workshop.
- A project has begun to connect people who cannot compost, to supply their kitchen compostables to people wanting material for their compost bins
- There was a Clothing and Other-Useful-Things Exchange along with a potluck and replenishing of the Move-it-Forward cupboard in November.

SUSTAINABLE LIVING / FOOD

11. -A food-preserving workshop was held at the church.
-Workshop on composting (see above under Energy)

12. -Local “100 Mile” Community lunches and canvas dinners have raised awareness of assessing food choices.

Other activities done in our second year that were not part of projects but which demonstrate a raised awareness of environmental issues and Earth honouring practices include:

- Green Sanctuary committee members submitted a monthly article to the newsletter.
 - Different members of the congregation made regular postings on environmental and Earth honouring topics to the list-serve.
 - Regular follow-up notes of our Kiva loan and Guatemalan poultry project were submitted to the congregation and list-serve.
 - Different members of the congregation regularly posted notices of relevant meetings and Green events to the list-serve.
 - A presentation was made after service on the Independent Power Projects with information on how to be active in preventing the privatization of public power and the rivers they will use.
 - A bridal shower using a “Green theme” was hosted at the church by the mother-of-the-bride.
 - A member of the congregation wrote a letter to the editor of a local newspaper to encourage people to shred their fallen leaves to add to the compost or use as garden mulch. Several members requested further information and reported enjoying doing this, including one member who shredded hers with a push mower!
 - There was a free giveaway after the Spring Yard Sale
- Are you are aware of anything we missed ? **Keep up the good work UFK !**

Communications Committee:

For any committees (or the Board) seeking to reach out to the greater community, with Fellowship related announcements or invitations, the Communication Committee will facilitate those efforts by posting your announcement on a variety of local electronic bulletin boards (eg: Castanet.) We request that you provide publish ready script to us by e-mail, at least one week prior to your event. Send your announcements to Sterling Haynes or Rick Hardman. It is our hope that this new initiative might alert a potential audience that is currently unaware of U.F.K. initiatives and opportunities.
With thanks, Your Communication Committee

INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNITY DANCE ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH AT 6PM – 10:30 ish

Come all ages and celebrate family, friendship, and fun!!!

Bring a dessert or snack to share and enjoy the music and dancing, visiting and games!

We will have a great sound system and wide range of music for all ages (gratefully donated:)

There will be game options and some quieter supervised space down stairs, especially for younger children if they choose.

We will have a range of music, some fun group and all age dances, and some great surprises!

Hope to see you there!

Suggested admission donation at the door: \$10.00 / adult and children free (covering small costs and fundraiser for the UFK)

Come in retro (50's, 60's, 70's, 80's) or as you are!

Spring Garage Sale will be held April 9th & 10th 2010.

This is a major fundraiser for the fellowship and it brings in **outside** money !

We will be selling: kitchen items, equipment, tools and household goods, small furniture, gardening items (no nursery pots or containers) books, games, tapes, CDs, videos, in-season sports equipment, toys, etc. **NO CLOTHING**, please.

The Garage Sale Committee is stream-lining our procedures to be more efficient and make the workload more equitable. We request that you prepare your donations for the garage sale ahead of time. Please only include what is sellable, clean, and in good repair. Sorting the donations and having to throw lots in the garbage, is time consuming and extra work for the set-up volunteers. Please group and bag together all parts of sets. With only clean, good quality items, we will make more money, the set up will be much smoother and some of the clean up at the end will be eliminated!

If you need a place to store your items, please contact Susan Grams.

We have decided to expand the hours - Friday 8am - 3 pm set up - items can be dropped off all day. We start the sale 3 pm - 7pm Friday and Saturday 8 am till 2 with the free giveaway starting at 2 pm. We will need lots of help -- and donations of food to keep our volunteers happy are much appreciated. Please plan to help as much as you can. – it's FUN !

Your Garage Sale Committee: Rita Parker, Audrey Pekarul, Bonnie Williams, Laila Isaak, Susan Grams, Mary Barton , Fae Shaw

Poet's Corner

Renewal - Kelly Hamilton

The crust on the lava dome cracks
The heat rises
Memories, emotions, trauma
Are shaken free
From the bowels
Of our unconscious
That discomfort
Moves us one way
Or another
Memories seep
Freed to solidify
At the surface
Acknowledge that sweet jam
It has preserved the pain
The burning desire
To transpose
Become comfortable
With our wisdom

A Few Fennys with a Green Theme:

RECYCLING

paper – caper

PERRENIAL GARDEN

flower – power

CLOTH WRAPPING

gift - lift

COMMUNITY GARDEN

plant – grant

CLOTHES- LINE

sun – done

BICYCLE

gas - pass

COMPOST BIN

scrap – trap

DISPOSABLE DIAPER

dumb – bum

