



*Unitarian Fellowship of Kelowna*

# *SIGNAL*

*January 2010 Newsletter*

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## **Upcoming Services**

**January 3rd: "Living our First Principle"** - Rev. Linda Weaver Horton

Our first Unitarian\* Universalist principle covenants us to "affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person." It is a noble sentiment, and not uniquely ours by any means. Yet our religious ancestors were profoundly serious about this commitment, even to the point of great personal sacrifice. How can we better embody this Principle? Does it have limits? Should we be extending it to "all beings?"

Our Community Sunday special offering will go to our local Drop-in Center, as their funding has been radically affected by recent cutbacks. Do plan to stay for our community lunch and conversation after the service

Note: children and youth will meet downstairs with Lois and the "Caring for our World" team for the full hour, as this Sunday is usually not one of high attendance.

**January 10th: "Covenant and Community"**

-Rev. Linda, Marilyn Raymond & the Respectful Relations Taskforce

Last year we made our first attempt to create a "Respectful Relations" covenant for our congregation. Feedback told us you wanted something shorter and more general. This morning you will hear briefly from four Respectful Relations Taskforce folk about four areas we think need to be covered, and have an opportunity to reflect upon these with a few others. What do we really need to articulate about our covenant with one another? With other people we relate to in our families and communities?

We will also take this occasion to officially install Louise McKenzie as our new Lay Chaplain before she begins to officiate at rites of passage for people from the larger community as our representative.

**January 17th: "Awakening into Mid-Life"** - Speaker: Nicole Kohnert,

- Coordinator: Kelly Hamilton

The beginning of a new year is a good time to reflect upon our lives and spiritual practices. For the next two Sundays, lay Members of our congregation will share reflections growing out of their own journeys.

Nicole writes: "I recently discovered an image that really seems to speak to me and that relates to where I am spiritually --I now have a vision of where I am and where I'm going -- and all I think I need to do is keep exploring ways to get there through various means such as simple daily ritual, practices, and monitoring my thoughts -- for now anyway."

**January 24th: Belief Systems... A Choice?** - Speaker: Robin Jarman

-Coordinator: Lindsay Atkinson-Smith

Do we have a choice when it comes to what we believe? To what extent do belief systems govern our lives? A thought-provoking presentation designed to help us examine our lives.

**January 31st: “Language and Spirituality”** - Rev. Linda Weaver Horton

Taoist scripture tells us the Tao dwells “where the chariot of words cannot go.” When is language a help or a hindrance on the spiritual path? Is there a Unitarian\* Universalist “language of reverence?” Or several? What do we say when someone wants to know what a Unitarian is?

We are tentatively planning to welcome our newest Members this Sunday.

This is our annual “Sharing our Faith” Sunday (shared with most of the congregations within the Canadian Unitarian Council), although our “Sharing our Faith” collection for the CUC’s growth grants fund will be the following week during our monthly Community Sunday service.

### **Minister’s Musings: Covenant, Community and Creating a Vision together**

The relational dimension of religious community is, for many, central to its redemptive and transformative power. I invite us to look at both those powers as we once again consider a Relational Covenant. They are related, yes -- but they are not the same! Redemptive power is healing. It helps us to return to a state of fundamental wholeness. Transformative power goes beyond repairing injuries to our psyches or rips in the web of our relationships. It participates in new creation.

First, the redemptive. Our Universalist ancestors were referred to as “No-Hellites.” I resonate deeply with their hope of banishing hell -- though I would define it differently. In a T. S. Eliot poem, hell is defined as the place “where nothing connects with nothing.” In contrast, Ecclesiastes (9:4) in the Hebrew scriptures tells us that “for to those who are joined to all the living, there is hope.” The Hebrew word “hope” in this context is related to the word for “spiderweb” – in other words, being a part of an “interdependent web.” We are challenged by our heritage to weave connections among “all the living,” and reach into those places where “nothing connects with nothing.” Isn’t this what compassion is all about? Is anything more central to our purpose?

So what about transformation? Our community is transformative when we create a safe space for people to tell and to hear about the unique, original experience each of us lives, as well as how we have shaped meaning from that experience. Psychologist Scott Peck points out that authenticity in relationship is never painless. It requires, he insists, “that we let matters rub up against each other, that we fully experience the tension of conflicting needs, demands, and interests, that we even be emotionally torn apart by them.”

The experience of community supports spiritual journeying into creative and often uncharted territory. We are challenged to embrace the discipline of going beyond the superficial, letting go of outcomes to which we are attached, sharing what gives meaning to our lives, and listening respectfully to one another. This discipline of listening not only has the power to transform us as individuals, but as a community as well. It can help us bring forth a collective vision that embraces a common sense of purpose and includes the creativity of many voices.

Elsewhere in this newsletter, you will find described a process of “listening circles” the Board has chosen for the next step in exploring our future directions. That step will come after we revisit in worship what our shared covenant means. In November, I spent 14 hours training

with colleagues in ways to handle our diverse opinions transformatively. When we approach learning about the varied perspectives of others with curiosity, open to learning from them rather than anxious to reach agreement, the creative synergy that can result often brings forth new possibilities. I urge you all to make an effort to attend one of the listening circles. They will be scheduled at diverse times to accommodate as many Members and interested Friends as possible. This is an important time to build a common vision together.

In Faith,

Rev. Linda

## **Religious Exploration Notes**

15 children and youth (if you count baby Rebecca!) were among the 24 cast members, 10+ support team, and a dozen additional singers and musicians who helped create our most ambitious ever mid-winter pageant: "Christmas with the Grinch." A number of folk contributed their creative ideas and abilities to making the result truly a community creation. Kudos to everyone for their dedication and enthusiasm. It was great fun, and there are rumours many of the cast would like to do it again next year and take it public!

Our Children's Religious Exploration Program begins the new calendar year with our annual Secret Pals project (see announcement). In January the Yellow group starts on a program we've done before, called "Treasure Hunters." They will be looking at what they value in themselves and their relationships. The Green group will continue to reflect upon Tools of Faith, this time qualities related to our seven Principles.

Perhaps in the new year you would consider being an R.E. leader or aide on an occasional Sunday morning – we could really use another volunteer or two! We are also looking for another person or two to take a turn at care-giving for our youngest (there is a small stipend available for that). It is very rewarding, a chance to learn more about our faith tradition and others while spending time with our engaging and creative children.

## **President's Message**

*"Again did the earth shift  
Again did the nights grow short  
And the days long*

*And the people  
Of the earth were glad  
and celebrated  
each in their own ways"*

*Diane Lee Moomey*

As I write this the winter solstice is coming up quickly and then the days will lengthen bringing with them the warmth of spring and summer, in time. Your board has been busy this past month working with the Finance Committee and reviewing the budget. When we met on

December 9 we had a shortfall of \$4000, but there were still a couple of pledges to come in. You will find the final update in the information from the Finance committee.

The revised Covenant of Right Relations will be presented to the congregation in January by Rev. Linda and Marilyn Raymond. As you learnt last month, the Nominating committee has been busy asking people if they will consider running for the board. I am hoping that by the time of the Annual General Meeting, on Feb. 21, that there will be a full slate of board members. As we are a relatively small board when people go away or get ill, we are sometimes challenged to not overload a couple of people on the board.

To help you plan for 2010 there will be a Garage Sale in April, date TBA. A Goods and Services auction on March 27 and a concert by Phyllis, Peter and Hugh on April 17. And of course, the annual CUC meeting on the May long weekend in Victoria.

I wish you all the best for 2010

Namaste, Maggie Nixon

## **Green Sanctuary – Creating Community in the New Decade**

As we move into this new decade, we are likely to experience unforeseen changes in how we live. We are dependant on oil for most of the manufacture and transport of the material goods in our lives including our homes, as well as for travel, warmth and cooling, and the production and transportation of our food.

For some time now we have been immersed in information about Climate Change and the damage it is doing. Peak Oil is another factor that will equally affect us. Demand has outstripped supply. What oil there is left is costly to produce and often extremely damaging to the environment as we see with the Tar Sands. The decrease in oil will push prices up and create a need to rethink the way we live. This sounds depressing but it can be an exciting time of change to a more community centred form of living. This is something many people crave nowadays but are at a loss for how to find it. Communities that are proactive and change to accommodate a new post oil way of life will do much better than those who wait for the crisis. Below are two ideas to get us thinking creatively.

Internationally, a practical movement which began in Britain is spreading around the world. It's called the Transition Movement. Here is a link to an inspiring talk given by the founder, Rob Hopkins on the TED interview series. I highly recommend listening to it.

[http://www.ted.com/talks/rob\\_hopkins\\_transition\\_to\\_a\\_world\\_without\\_oil.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/rob_hopkins_transition_to_a_world_without_oil.html) His book "The Transition Handbook: From oil dependency to local resilience" is available in the library.

There may be a Transition Town training in the Valley soon, which we will publicize.

Locally, a group of four building professionals recently formed BlueGreen Living Communities to help build communities in the city from as small as four dwellings up to over thirty. Their focus is on guiding a group of people through the process of creating their own sustainable community beginning in the dreaming stages, through planning and design, building, and creating a code of living. Using consensus, their focus is on creating 'community' and using green building practices. The company shares any profits from the development with all of the group. They are currently working on a project for a multi-storey, multi-use building with Kamloops United Church. Maggie, Rod and I attended their first

presentation and were very impressed. They will be giving bi-monthly presentations throughout the year. This time they shared stories of how this kind of community has been formed in the Scandinavian counties for over 60 years and is now appearing in Portland and Vancouver. We will notify you of their next presentation.

Wishing you a Happy New Year - of learning new ways to honour the interdependent web of life of which we are all a part.

Submitted by Gwen Steele for the Green Sanctuary Committee

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead

Gwen Steele

### **Treasurer's Report – Notice from Finance Committee**

What do you want from the UFK?

The Finance Committee is making a last-minute appeal for you to consider increasing your pledge for 2010. Last year we had to make drastic cuts to the church's operating finances to cope with the economic downturn, and this year we are trying to make a recovery by increasing our budget (your budget!) by \$8000. But we need your help to do it! We are still about \$4000 short of bringing our ministry and services back to where we think they need to be. Without more support, the Board may have to make cuts to:

- a desperately needed office assistant
- the worship committee, which plans our Sunday services
- the social responsibility committee, which carries our values and vision to the wider world.

Please think about what is valuable and important to you that you find here at the Unitarian Fellowship. If you still haven't handed in a pledge card, please drop one in the offering plate next Sunday, or if you have already filled one out, please consider increasing your pledge amount, to reflect your faith and vision for the coming year. Contact Al Semper with your updated information by the beginning of January.

Remember, this church consists of all of us, and we can only get from it what we put into it.

Wayne Broughton

### **Building Futures Team**

Dear Friends,

At the conclusion of the Building Futures meeting in October we found ourselves in the complex position of having so many diverse opinions about how to proceed, or not, that we decided to take breathing break and reevaluate.

In October, the Board presented the BFT2 (Building Futures Team 2) information to the congregation and provided an opportunity to discuss three possible options for further exploration. The first option was to develop our properties. To pursue this option we would form a partnership with the Kelowna Music School. Together we would lobby the city for variances on the allowable size and height of our building in order to have a building large

enough to meet both our needs and pay for itself. Only if this proved viable would we proceed further. We assumed this option would appeal to most of the congregation since it was following along the path that BFT1 had received support to explore in June and October of 2008.

The second option was to pursue the vision of a stand-alone church, on this property (where research had determined the cost would be prohibitive) or elsewhere. Third was to manage our current property in such a way as to make at least some progress towards meeting our objectives of accessibility, room for growth, green values, etc.

The first option, while supported by a small majority of those present, didn't strike enough of a common chord with our church community to go forward with at that point; options two and three needed more detail and explanation. For example, under current financial circumstances and what we have learned about Kelowna's zoning regulations, is it true that making our current building accessible could cost us more than a multi-use development project? What are the pros and cons of having partners or having a multi-use versus a single use building? A flurry of excitement was generated by news of a small church for sale in our neighborhood. This building did not turn out to be appropriate for our needs but the interest in exploring it does indicate a willingness to consider change.

The Board has decided that we need to take a step back down the "assumptions ladder". In community we must clearly articulate our common vision of our mission, purpose and values, as well as our needs, as we look towards the future. Then all options for building change can be tested against this common vision. The hard work of BFT1 and BFT2 will not be lost. Our decision may come around to development again. Or perhaps we will find a new location out in our community that is financially viable. Whatever solution we eventually arrive at will be something that resonates with us all, as much as is possible with such a group of diverse individuals.

In late January and Early February, you will be provided with an opportunity to meet in Listening Circles with approximately eight other Members and Friends of this congregation to find a common ground of values and needs as we consider our future. This will be a scripted circle where every participant will be given opportunity to speak. Facilitators will guide the sessions and note takers will record responses for the Board. We will be looking for volunteers to host such a circle in their home.

A report will be prepared for the AGM in February and the new Board will draw upon this information as they create a mandate for a Building Futures Team 3.

Didn't someone relatively important on the world stage fairly recently say "together we can"? Well, together we can and we will. Together, we will find our path into a future where our congregation helps to shape a more just, caring and ecologically sustainable world.

Happy New Year

Marilyn, Louise, and Rev. Linda (on behalf of the Board)

## **Poet's Corner**

No poems this time but Liz Fenn of NY, the originator of the Fenny, sent me three medical ones for Christmas. Liz would like the kids of our church to start writing poetry and Fennys.

OW	STROKE	<i>GROAN</i>
hurt-alert	brain-drain	pain-again

A Christmas Fenny or two from Jessie.

MISTLETOE	TARTS
kiss-bliss	puff-stuff

Hi kids and adults please send me your Fenny or short poem early in January. Merry Christmas.

Cheers, & Chuckles,  
Sterling

## **Announcements**

**A Memorial Service for Florence Morton** will be held at 2 PM on Saturday, January 9<sup>th</sup> at the church. Florence died on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, and a service was held in the Hamilton church on December 12<sup>th</sup> for family and friends in the city where she and Chuck lived most of their lives and raised their five children. This is our opportunity to celebrate her life and learn more about what a unique person she was, and to offer Chuck and his family our love and support. Laila Isaak will be coordinating refreshments for a reception after the service, so please contact her if you would like to help.

### **Get Ready for our Annual SECRET PALS Project!**

Look for signup sheets at the back of the sanctuary, or let Lois know by phone or e-mail if you are interested.

### **A Warm Thank You**

To all the 40 or more people who contributed to making our "Christmas with the Grinch" pageant such a success!

### **Calling All Committee Chairs**

The date of our Annual Meeting has been set, and it will be on Feb. 21, 2010. Glenda Palmer has kindly offered to type up and collate all the information that is required for our Annual meeting - so... all committee reports need to be in to Glenda by January 25, 2010.

Please send your report electronically to Glenda and you will find her email address in our updated Church Directory. Should any of you not be hooked up to the internet, please talk

directly to Glenda to see what would be the most convenient for her. While the date of 25/1/10 may seem early, remember that the finalized copies of the AGM need to be available for distribution at the service on February 7.

Thank you all, Maggie

**Rev. Linda will be on family leave** from January 16-30<sup>th</sup>, to support her daughter Laurinda Reddig through the birth of granddaughter Willow. In case of urgent need, Lloyd and church Board members will know how to reach her. E-mail is good if you are not in a rush, or you can try her US cell phone: 360-989-8150.

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For more information about our congregation please visit our website: [www.unitariancongregation.org/kelowna](http://www.unitariancongregation.org/kelowna)  
**Sunday Services begin at 10:30 am. Childcare and programs are available year round.**  
The Signal is distributed on the last Sunday of each month. Deadline for submissions is the Monday prior to distribution. Please send submissions to [ufksignal@hotmail.com](mailto:ufksignal@hotmail.com)