



THE Chalice

NEWSLETTER OF THE
ELORA & FERGUS UNITARIAN CHURCH
MARCH – APRIL 2009

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We freely gather to explore spirituality, truth and meaning in our lives, and to provide a base for our children's spiritual growth. We welcome the free exchange of ideas in an environment of respect for diverse beliefs, backgrounds and theologies. We join together in fellowship to celebrate our uniqueness as individuals and to reach out to our community guided by the principles of Unitarian Universalism.

This article was printed in the Fergus-Elora News Express, February 25, 2009, in the Life Line column.

PONDERING THE SCRIPTURE OF LIFE

“What’s the scripture of your life?” That was a question asked of me a while ago. I think that the question was posed with one part curiosity, one part challenge. But then the guy asking the question is known for that. He’s also known to go on a bit, but mostly he’s harmless.

Part of his curiosity was to see what would come out. Unitarian Universalists don’t have a fixed set of holy books or scriptures they follow, so the answer is not terribly predictable. Some Unitarian Universalists have none at all—they just try to live kindly. Some embrace a vast landscape of scriptures, holy writings from many cultures, and wisdom from the ages. And many Unitarian Universalists have a home faith based on their Christian or Buddhist or Jewish, or Muslim traditions (the list is endless), and use the diversity found in Unitarian Universalism to refine that faith.

Part of my questioner’s challenge was to see if I could actually answer the question. He wanted to see if all my reading and thinking and sharing was actually translating into a personal scripture for

me. Yep, that man in the mirror sure can ask hard questions sometimes.

If you were to ask your friends or acquaintances about the scripture of their life, some might answer, “Who cares?” Some might ask, “Who wants to know?” Some might spend a long time telling you in great detail about the scripture they read, and the god they follow, and the prophet they listen to. But the deeper answer, that sacred inner scripture that directs their spiritual core and is the reason they believe what they believe—that is rarely offered. Many have never asked that question of themselves. In some way, their own scripture is a book not yet written.

So how would you answer the question, “What is the scripture of your life?” Would you hide a lack of one with nonchalance? Would you be suspicious of the motivations of the inquirer? Would you be able to offer solid, lovingly worn truths that guide you as you walk the road of this life? Or are those well loved truths evolving as you get older?

Socrates said a long time ago, “An unexamined life is not worth living.” Pondering, developing, and re-finishing the scripture of our lives helps make us whole. It does require an investment in time and introspection. It might bring up some interesting things you didn’t know about yourself.

It can challenge you. And sometimes it can be threatening to people around you who don't want you to grow. But it is worth it.

Books like, "Spirituality for Dummies" can be a great resource to guide you through the process (really, it is a great book!). It can help to have a place to go to be with other people who are nurturing their own scripture. But even if all you can do is find a quiet place for five minutes a day, go there. Every day. Be still. And ask yourself, "What is the scripture of my life?" You might be surprised at the answer.

Dwight Pile, Sunday Services committee



40 YEARS OF UNICAMP

Unicamp is only a few hours drive from most of the city-centers of Southern Ontario yet it is a timeless escape from the realities of urban life. Campers have come from across eastern North America to enjoy Unicamp's serene 50 acre site near Honeywood, Ontario. Some have even traveled from as far away as New Zealand, Hong Kong, Japan, Germany, Holland, South America and other corners of the globe. Unicamp has been a special place for Unitarians and their children to enjoy for 39 glorious summers, and we're about to have one of our best seasons yet!

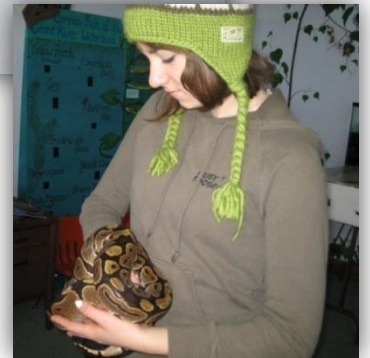
Unitarian congregations are institutional members of Unicamp upon paying their annual dues, and are thus stakeholders of this precious gem north of Shelburne. Unicamp is located within the UNESCO Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve with a five-acre clear, cool, spring-fed pond; two sandy beaches; pine and broad leaf forests; meadows drifted with wildflowers; aged orchards and reedy marshlands; deep mossy crevices with caves; pure icy streams; shade-dappled ferns and open, sunny spaces. There are vantage points with panoramic views of sun and moon rises. There are creatures in the pond: frogs, fish, turtles and waterfowl, with muskrats in the marshes. The woods harbour raccoons, chipmunks, squirrels, porcupine and even deer, wild turkey, quail and red fox on occasion. The fields and the forests are abundant with edible plants like wild ginger and carrots; morel, puffball and shaggy-mane mushrooms; wild apples, grapes, raspberries and more. Songbirds, woodpeckers, hawks, herons and giant dragonflies follow their quests. Bats come from the caves to play games in the darkening sky while children gleefully chase fireflies at the outer reaches of a bonfire encircled by drummers, singers, dancers and laughter.

Unicamp Day is the first Sunday after Groundhog Day, this year it's February 8, 2009. It's a day that gives Unicampers a wonderful opportunity to organize a special Celebration of Unicamp Service at your congregation with readings, poems and memories, and even Unicamp songs and dances. What does Unicamp mean to you? Why is it so special to your family? Tell the world and especially your congregation!

On February 10th 2009 Unicamp will turn 40 years old, although we feel a lot younger! For as long as Unitarians have owned this land and probably much longer, the acres at Unicamp have been free of farming pesticides, chemicals and other corrosives. We compost, reuse, recycle and

conserve. We have a population that attempts to rest gently on the earth. We are pursuing a 'Green Sanctuary' designation from the CUC. But it's not what we do that makes Unicamp such a mystical place of restorative healing energy and youthful vibrancy. It's what you feel: the connections made in sharing the spiritual experience of lush peace in nature. It's the people; the likeminded people who don't think you're an odd-ball if you are atheist and into alternative medicine, or pagan, or a on a spiritual quest but holding down a conventional job in a big city. Come for the community - the free-range children giggling in the raspberry patch; the exuberant staff and their captivating songs and stories; the Sunday afternoon deck discussions that range from philosophy to ecology to activism and vegetable gardening. Come enjoy Unicamp with us during this special celebratory 40th anniversary summer. Be a part of this unique UU retreat for your summer vacation in 2009. Our special 40th Anniversary Celebration will be on the 2009 Civic Holiday weekend. We hope to see all of you then or even sooner!

Kendrew Pape, Unicamp Communication Chair



Pictures of the snowshoe event at the Guelph Lake Nature Centre.



Pictures of Chaplain Jill Davey's installation.



WHAT'S ON AT CHURCH IN MARCH & APRIL 2009

Community Yoga class starts at 8:30 followed by the Church service at 10:00 am

March 1 **MAYAN CIVILIZATION**

Alison Normore from Guelph will share her knowledge of the life and times of the spiritually and culturally advanced Mayan civilization.

Service leader: Dwight Pile

Music: Denis Roulet

March 8 **SERVICE WITH LINDA REITH**

Linda Reith from the Guelph Unitarian Fellowship will be joining us this Sunday.

March 15 **HOW CAN I HELP?**

Social Action is an important function of our religious life. Today's service will look at what we do, how we do it, and why.

March 22 **UNIVERSALISM**

"So What's the Universalism Bit All About?"

While the Unitarian part of our tradition has its focus on thought and reason, Universalism has its roots in the heart. We will look at 'the other half' of our faith this Sunday.

Service leader: Dwight Pile

March 29 **MUSIC SERVICE**

A group of wandering musicians from the hamlet of Guelph Unitarian will join us this Sunday to share their harmony. Don your frock, bring your staff, and don't forget the mead!

April 5 **WHAT TO DO WITH GLOOM**

A sermon by Rev. A. Powell Davies, D.D., presented by David Steuermol.

April 12 **EASTER SUNDAY**

Come join with us to celebrate our 15th Anniversary as a church in this community. We are expecting friends old and new for this very special service.

April 19 **EARTH DAY SERVICE**

April 26 **"THE PRACTICE OF OUR FAITH"**

Part 1

Every other religion, and many other faith journeys talk about their spiritual practice. This Sunday we will look at what Universalist spiritual practice embodies. Service leader: Dwight Pile

UPCOMING POD DUTIES

POD #1 Kerry*, Karen, Dwight, Kim and Deborah.
Dates: March 8, April 12, May 17

POD #2 Anna* & Don, Rob, Miranda, Louisa & Nardo.
Dates: March 15, April 19, May 24

POD #3 Kelsye* & Paul, Jennifer, Leigh & Terisa.
Dates: March 22, April 26, May 31

POD #4 David*, Ineke, Arwa, Catharina and Julie.
Dates: March 29, May 3, June 7

POD #5 Chris* & Norm, Jill, Ellen & Jim.
Dates: March 1, April 5, May 10

* denotes contact person for the POD