



THE Chalice

NEWSLETTER OF THE
ELORA & FERGUS UNITARIAN CHURCH
SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2010

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.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

It's the start of a new season for our congregation, and like all new things, it holds so much potential and promise. I wish I could be there for the first service. The pancake breakfast tradition has always seemed to me to be such a "sweet" way to start the new year. Alas, I am in Nairobi, Kenya at the moment, and the commute from here to Fergus is gruelling. So I will have to join you next week after my return on September 14.

I have been here in East Africa for the past six weeks working on a project on food security policy with McGill and the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute. It has been an eye-opening experience that has led me from farmers' fields to research farms to board rooms and, finally and if I am lucky enough, to the office of the Minister of Agriculture. Farmers, in particular, have been such an inspiration to me and have made the work a joy and pleasure, though no less of a challenge. I look forward to sharing some of my experiences - and photos - with you after my return.

On another note, I tried very hard to locate the Unitarian church here in Nairobi. I had found on the internet that there are actually some 30 UU congregations across the country, from Kisii, the tea-growing region near Lake Victoria; to the Rift Valley where pastoralist Maasai people have taken up the

Unitarian chalice; to Nairobi and Central Kenya, where at least four congregations have begun. Alas, none of the articles I read on line had information about the exact location of any of these churches. Nor do any of the Unitarian churches here have websites of their own. There is also a Kenya Unitarian Universalist Council, but they do not have a website either. I even went so far as to ask some preachers, who were holding a conference at the guest house where I am staying, if they knew where the Unitarian church was in Nairobi. "Uni-what?" they asked with a puzzled look. So it's going to take a little more research, which I hope I can do before my next trip to Kenya some time next year.



In the meantime, I have tried in my research, writing, travels and interactions with ordinary and extraordinary Kenyans, to live the UU principles, despite having no church building or Sunday service to attend. It has not been difficult. I have found, especially in the Nakuru National Park in the Great Rift Valley, that the temple of the Earth is truly the most awesome and sacred space around. And there, among the lions, buffalo, zebras, giraffes, rhinoceros, monkeys and flamingos, my favourite hymn - The Blue Green Hills of Earth - came to life.

So have a great Sunday, and save a pancake for me. There is lots to look forward to this season and I eagerly anticipate the many opportunities we will have to share, learn, grow and be together

Leigh Brownhill, President



YARD SALE

The yard sale we had on June 18 and 19 was a great succes! We ended up with \$526.45 to add to our church budget.

I thank anybody who donated their time and/or reusable goods.

Louisa Kuitert

GOING DOWN THE ROAD WITH UNITARIANS - OR: HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATIONS

During our summer break, I decided to visit a few other Unitarian congregations to see what they were like. As a new Unitarian, I am curious about how congregations might differ from one community to another.

Jim Sannes offered to organize a trip to the Kingsville area to visit the Unitarian Universalist Church of Olinda. So on a hot Saturday in August, Chris Nye and I piled into Jim and Ellen's Buick to head on down the highway.

Founded in 1880 as a Universalist Church, it is the oldest continuously operating U.U. church in Canada. I find it amazing that a group of farming families at that time were so progressive and inclusive in their thinking that they determined to start a church that taught that love is stronger than fear and that all people share the same destiny at the end of their life.

For many years the Olinda Church was the hub of all social activities in the area. Now with the competition from mass media and other factor, the numbers have dwindled, but theirs is still an active congregation with a minister and lay chaplain.

On our arrival in Kingsville, we met a dozen or so members of the congregation at a restaurant to share a meal and get to know each other. Afterward, we each left with the people who had opened their homes to us as overnight guests. I was hosted by a remarkable woman who had started a migrant farm worker program among other community initiatives. After a lovely breakfast on the patio with my host an her two pugs, we

headed off to the white frame church at Olinda in the mist of fruit and vegetable farms.

During the service we were introduced to the congregation and given a warm welcome. I enjoyed the hearty singing of the songs, especially Hymn 311 “Let it Be a Dance”. At the front of the sanctuary, there was a large rectangular depiction of the chalice and flame made of carved and colourfully stained pieces of wood. This beautiful piece of art was commissioned from a local artist.

After coffee and cakes, a tour of the building and a group photo, we climbed back into the car to head for home but not before stocking up on as many fresh peaches, melons and tomatoes as we could fit in.

The following week, Jim and Ellen and I visited the First Unitarian Congregation of Waterloo. This is a large congregation. I was surprised to meet several old friends there who were equally surprised to see me. The

service centered around an exploration of Sikhism with a talk by a leader of the local temple and music of the harmonium and tabla which accompanied vocals. After coffee we had a chance to sit around a table and talk with the guest speaker.

I visited the Unitarian Church of Guelph on two occasions by myself during the summer. This is a dynamic congregation that spans all age groups. At the front of their sanctuary there is a large photo of a blue lake surrounded by green trees with a red canoe moored by the shore. It is a lovely place to rest your eyes and remember our connection to nature.

I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting so many Unitarians in different settings but like Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz, I believe there is no place like home. I am eager to see everyone in my home Elora-Fergus congregation at the pancake breakfast to start a new year of celebrating and growing together.

Janice Ferri





UPCOMING POD DUTIES

POD #1 Kelsye* & Paul, Janice, Carolyn

Dates: Sept. 12, Oct. 10, Nov. 7, Dec. 5, Jan. 16, Feb. 13, March 13, April 10, May 8, June 5

POD #2 Chris*, Ellen & Jim, Leigh & Terisa

Dates: Sept. 19, Oct. 17, Nov. 14, Dec. 12, Jan. 23, Feb. 20, March 20, April 17, May 15

POD #3 Deborah*, Margaret, Ineke, Margie

Dates: Sept. 26, Oct. 24, Nov. 21, Dec. 19, Jan. 30, Feb. 27, March 27, April 24, May 22

POD #4 Anna* & Don, Jill, Louisa & Nardo, Mairy

Dates: Oct. 3, Oct. 31, Nov. 28, Jan. 9, Feb. 6, March 6, April 3, May 1, May 29

* denotes contact person for the POD



MY THREE WEEKS IN UNICAMP AS A CIT

For the month of July, I participated in the Councillor In Training (CIT) program at Unicamp. There were nine other CIT's there, most of whom I had never met before.

For the first week we did some activities to help us be more comfortable with each other and some common situations we would encounter with the six-to-eleven year old campers. The next two weeks saw us in cabins, helping the campers and their fully-trained counsellors. The first week in cabins I was with a counsellor named Jasper, and that was entertaining! (I got the nickname Yes-man)

The main hall has a medium-sized bell, which rung around 18 times a day, nine of which were just for meals! Two per major meal, two snacks, and one for a before-bed treat. The rest were for wake-up, activities or programs and bed. All in all, not an hour without “ding! ding-ding!...ding-ding!...ding-ding!” and some message yelled from the dining hall.

The meals had vegetarian options at all times and there was not a hint of junk food on site. (Although there was ice cream, but that was Mapleton's Organic.). Well, that's not entirely true, because on Thursday everybody could order candy to devour later in the afternoon.

Every day there was a camp-wide game. A favourite was Capture the Flag. Normally, neither team won, but on the third week, the blue team won! (I was on the red team, unfortunately) There were other activities too, like various arts and crafts including clay sculpting and tie dye shirts, swimming, ultimate Frisbee and other outdoor games.

On Wednesdays there was a dance, each time with a different theme, such as Gender Bender, which meant (most) people were cross-dressing. All in all I had a great time and the three weeks flew by. I am looking forward to my next visit to Unicamp!

- *Jesper Kuitert*



WHAT'S ON AT CHURCH IN SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2010

Church service starts at 10:00 am

Sept. 12 ANNUAL PANCAKE BREAKFAST AND WATER CEREMONY

Bring water symbolizing your favourite summer holiday experience. Could be from far away or out of your back yard and share your thoughts.

Sept. 19 "LISTENING TO YOUR INNER GUIDE"

The quiet intuitive voice can lead to a more fulfilling life of creativity and service. My story will be based on real "experiences" and how I ended up in Haiti earlier this year simply by paying attention to my intuition which was brilliantly guiding the pathway.

Guest Speaker: Mandip Kaur Sandher

Sept. 26 THAT SECOND "U" IN "UU" UNIVERSALISTS IN CANADA

Brief references to other Universalist congregations including the story of the Lutheran Icelanders, who founded the Winnipeg Unitarian congregation.

Guest Speaker: Louise Foulds

WHO YA GONNA CALL?

President	Leigh Brownhill
Vice President	Ineke Booy
Lay Chaplain	Ellen Papenburg Jill Davey
Secretary	Kelsye Coulter
Treasurer	Nardo Kuitert
Sunday Services	Jim Sannes
Social Action	Terisa Turner
Communications	Louisa Kuitert
Membership	Christine Nye

Oct. 3 STEPPING INTO FREEDOM

From the front lines of activism in war-torn Vietnam to worldwide prominence as a Buddhist teacher, every step of Thich Nhat Hanh's 80+ years of life has been for peace and the dharma. I will be leaving Canada in the fall to undergo the discernment process for ordination as a Buddhist nun.

Guest Speaker: Melina Bondy

Oct. 10 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: UTOPIAN DREAM OR ACHIEVABLE REALITY?

Many writers and activists have worked to raise awareness about the importance of living in a more environmentally sustainable fashion. But how and, perhaps more importantly, can this be achieved?

Guest Speaker: Alisa McClurg

Oct. 17 THE MEMORIAL SOCIETY OF K-W

This organization is about the funeral industry and how you can avoid contributing to corporate funeral homes and make the passing more human including natural burial options.

Guest Speaker: Allan Grose

Oct. 24 THE PAINTING AT THE FRONT

We have traditionally covered the painting with our banner. Time to have a bit of history and an introduction to the painter.

Speaker: Janice Ferri

Oct. 31 A SERVICE OF MUSIC

Our hearts respond to music in inexpressable and unquantifiable ways. Singer songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Guy Stefan and guitarist Don Beals will explore this through music performance and discussion.