

UUFO Presents / Présentent

Fellowship News Infolettre RUUO

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Trees Surrounded By Wooden Fences Covered in Snow (Larvik, Norway) photo by Wirestock via freepik.com

BOARDWALK

Brandon M

Despite the pandemic, UUFO's "wheel of the year" rolls on. The pledge campaign started on October 25th and the annual budget meeting has been set for January 10th, 2021.

In addition to the usual events, the past few months have seen some big changes. To relieve pressure on UUFO's volunteers, the board recently approved a motion to give our office administrator, Allison Armstrong, extra

hours to act as "Zoom coordinator." In this role she will edit and prepare music and videos and act as the Zoom host for Sunday services. The board is committed to continuing to support the worship cluster in coordinating Sunday services.

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"Lit Candle" – Photo by Rolf Schweizer Fotografie
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Coin français

Lucie-Marie C B

Salut à vous tous,

Comme vous venez d'apprendre, notre Rassemblement s'enrichit d'une autre activité.

Avec notre Célébration francophone, le Cercle de croissance spirituelle et le Groupe de

DiscUssion nous pourrions davantage se rencontrer et partager même si pour le moment, nous devons nous contenter de le faire virtuellement.

Déjà votre présence et votre participation nous sont très précieuses. Nos Célébrations francophones sont toujours teintées de joie, de partages personnels enrichissants et de motivation stimulante.

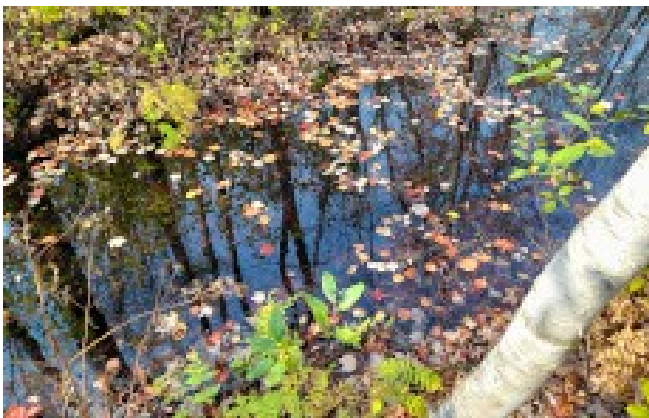
Quant à notre Cercle de croissance spirituelle, nos rencontres mensuelles nous font grandir non seulement spirituellement, mais aussi intellectuellement et humainement.

Soyez toujours bien à l'aise de nous faire parvenir vos commentaires et suggestions. Nous en avons besoin. Merci à l'avance.

Puisse la saison hivernale vous octroyer tous ses plaisirs et son temps d'intériorité.

Amitiés, paix, lumière,

Lucie-Marie



October 10 Walking Meditation – Photo by Janet

...BOARDWALK – Continued from P1

As we adjust to new ways of being together, changes are taking place outside of Sunday services as well. Pub night has morphed into a social gathering based on rotating themes. Our intern minister is holding a 9-week “Spirit of Life” workshop which will be open to UUFO, First Unitarian and even some outsiders. It represents an opportunity for new people to meet us. In other news, the board is taking steps to reduce UUFO’s carbon footprint. Last year, we set a goal of removing fossil fuels from UUFO’s investment portfolio. Because mutual funds include investments in many companies, this proved to be no easy task. But after months of research by Dave Edmunds and others, we have successfully divested UUFO of funds that support fossil fuels. In addition, at the suggestion of Heartwood House, we have signed up for a free program called Greening Sacred Spaces. This program provides “energy benchmarking” for places of worship, which may result in opportunities to save energy. Heartwood House’s section of the building will be included in the data collected.

A second opportunity to review our proposed new bylaws was offered, and the board is now proceeding with the next step, which is to have the bylaws reviewed by a lawyer. If this is not done in time for the bylaws to be passed at the January budget meeting, they will be passed at the AGM instead.

The board is looking forward to a virtual solstice service and to even brighter things in the new year.

UUFO Film Club

Michel J

The UUFO movie discussions have been doing well. We were meeting every second Monday however now we will be meeting every second Friday of the month at 5 pm. We discussed Indian Horse, Silver Lining Playbook and Don't Talk to Irene.

We usually discuss movies that are available on Netflix or CBC Gem. Indian Horse was disturbing in that it portrayed the difficult life of a Indigenous youth who loved hockey. We explored mental illness in an enjoyable romantic comedy called The Silver Lining Playbook. The discussion participants really enjoyed this film.



"Cinema Stuff" - Photo provided by freepik.com

The last film we discussed, at the time of this writing, was Don't Talk to Irene. This is a fun quirky Canadian film about a high school girl who is over weight and wants to be a cheerleader. She has to do some community service at a retirement home and decides to choreograph a number featuring some of the residents in a song and dance number.

It has been a lot of fun watching these films and discussion them. New movie fans are always welcome.

Friday Night Social Activities

Michel J

For months now, allison c and myself have been hosting Friday night "pub nights" on zoom every Friday at 5pm. We have had some wonderful conversations and have enjoyed seeing a core of loyal attendees. Zoom has been a such an asset in helping maintain community during our pandemic. Getting together at actual pubs would be awesome however this is the next best thing.

Recently we decided to change things up and so now we are calling the 5 pm UUFO zoom get together the Friday Night Wind Down. On the first Friday of the month we will have an open discussion, on the second Friday a movie discussion (which replaces the Monday night movie discussion), and on the third Friday a book discussion led by Andrea and Diane. On the fourth Friday a music and sing along night hosted by Michel B, and when there is a fifth Friday in the month a poetry discussion. We hope to see you in one of the zoom windows. You are more than welcome to participate!



October 10 Walking Meditation – Photo by Janet

The Mitten Tree and Me

Jeannie G

My first knitting project was a common, every-day, cotton string pot holder for my mother. Not that there was much common about it with all its dropped stitches, uneven tension, tangles and holes but as a six-year-old schoolgirl, I was proud of it. That was followed by a pair of tube socks for the “poor children in Korea” teacher said... victims of the Korean War. (Yes. I am dating myself.) I was less proud of the resulting socks as the bright pink yarn had gradually turned grey from my sweaty, nervous efforts at knit 2-pearl 2. The grey band blossomed into pink toes as I became more proficient toward the end. But still, what would those Korean children think of us? Did we not realize that they had heels on their feet just like everyone else? I had never seen tube socks, let alone worn them.

Fast forward several decades and I had graduated to a pullover for the high school sweetheart, baby bonnets, sweaters and booties for my nieces and nephews, and even a few Mary Maxim bulky knit cardigans for friends. In the process I had accumulated quite a collection of odds and ends of yarn...all of which had been gathering dust in my basement and not doing anyone one bit of good.

Enter the Unitarian Universalist Congregation Mitten Tree. Ah ha, thought I! Perfect spot for an amateur knitter, *comme moi*! No need to be perfect. These are not for sale. They need proficiency not perfection. Great destination for surplus yarn and it will keep my hands out of the potato chip bag as I knit to relax in front of the TV. Double good service. So I started in and before I knew it, I had dozens of hats in various shapes and colours.

So I switched to mittens for variety. Now knitting one hat is no big deal, nor is knitting one mitt or sock but making the second mitt or sock look exactly like the first...ah, now that is a bit of a challenge for a reformed potato chip addict. So I moved on to scarves.

It finally dawned on me. If it takes 2 or 3 evenings to knit a cap, I could sew one out of fleece on my serger in an hour or less. Production increased 5 fold. And every one gets a tassel or pom-pom. More yarn out of my house.

Then my husband got into the act. He is a Buddhist and regularly attends Temple. He introduced the Mitten



Photo provided by Jeannie Guy



Photo provided by Jeannie Guy

...The Mitten Tree and Me continued...

Tree concept to that group of devotees and now that is an annual event there with the proceeds going to a local women's shelter.

And what of my hoard of leftover yarn? Well, I seem to have more now than when I started ten years ago! No, it is not a case of a miraculous multiplying of yarn balls but a case of two generous sisters buying up every bit of sale yarn in two provinces! Ah, the cross I bear!

But when I saw a small child on the bus one cold winter day sporting one of my bright caps, I knew I had to keep going. I'm a long way from warm tube socks for poor Korean children but our local children are in need of warmth too. Warmth for their heads and some for my heart too.



Photo provided by Helmut



Photo provided by Helmut

Happy Solstice, joyeux Noël!

UUFO wishes our members and friends a joyful season of light.

Nous souhaitons à nos membres et amis une joyeuse saison des lumières.



"Beautiful Sunset, Snowy Field" - Photo by Wirestock, via freepik.com

An Update from UUFO's Welcome and Membership Committee

The reality of the Covid-19 pandemic means we are unable to welcome visitors and newcomers in our usual friendly, person-to-person fashion, for the time being. We hope to have an in-person Newcomers Get-together and a New Members' Ceremony as soon as we are able in the new year.

In the meantime, if you, or anyone you know would like information about our Fellowship, or if you are interested in becoming a member of our Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, please contact any member of the Welcome and Membership Committee below. You can also find more about our Rassemblement Français from either Lucie-Marie Castonguay-Bower or Carolle Séguin.

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Image via freepik.com

UUFO Meditations

Isobel B and Marie-Claire d M

Now the winter months are upon us Marie Claire and I suggest a return to bi-weekly Zoom meditations until it is safe to resume indoor gatherings.

In the past Evangeline has taken the lead in organizing the biweekly indoor meditations. Marie Claire and I have agreed to take over this task but will need some other volunteers to help share the job of leading the meditations on Zoom. Please let us know if you're interested. Thank you.

For those who are interested and able, we suggest continuation of the outdoor nature meditations through the winter months, either walking, snowshoeing, or maybe cross country skiing. We are happy to continue organizing these walks.



Photo by Wirestock via Freepik.com

~ Be Here Now ~

Groupe de discUUsion du RUUO

Maurice C-P

Par le passé, des membres du *Rassemblement Unitarien Universaliste d'Ottawa (RUUO)* et du *First Unitarian* se rencontraient pour discuter, en français, de sujets liés à nos principes et à nos préoccupations.



Dès le mois de janvier 2021, le **Groupe de DiscUUsion** reprendra ses activités. Ces discussions sont une recherche de moyens d'exprimer notre engagement envers la justice sociale et envers une communauté et un monde empreints de non-violence, de justice, d'équité et de compassion. Parmi les enjeux qui mobilisent le Rassemblement dans des initiatives d'Action Sociale on retrouve : les injustices qui ont caractérisé la colonisation des territoires des Premières Nations et les injustices qui perdurent aujourd'hui; la violence, la guerre et la course aux armements; les réfugiés; la faim; les sans-abris.

Lors de la rencontre inaugurale, nous aurons l'occasion d'entendre le Rév. Fulgence Ndagijimana nous expliquer une nouvelle initiative pour venir en aide à des réfugiés du Burundi. Les détails de la rencontre seront annoncés dans Friday Notes.

From the Caring Circle

Mark M

The ongoing pandemic has made the isolation for some more acute. Others are coping but all miss real human contact. We hear about these feelings of loss and grief in our calls and other encounters.

Strangely, despite the pandemic some UUFOers are moving or have moved in the last few months. Coincidence or pandemic fever? Allison C. started it but packed and unpacked too vigorously and injured her shoulder. She is currently convalescing from an operation. Paula P. also moved, from her retirement residence to her daughter's home. At the end of November Don and Louise McD. made their move within Perth to a brand-new apartment. Lastly, Marina J. decided living close to the Governor-General had to come to an end and her move is imminent. Will the GG be the next to move?

More sorrowful and shocking was the news that two dear friends of UUFO were the victims of a violent incident recently. In speaking with them, they appreciated the messages of concern and support as they recover fully from their injuries, both to body and soul. We were saddened to hear, and our thoughts are with E.N. Hill, our Intern Minister, as he grieves and comes to terms with the loss of a member of his family. It is just over a year ago that Maggie Cox passed away. A great loss! Maggie, a long-time Unitarian was also an accomplished potter who created our chalice used every Sunday. Keep her in your hearts!

On a more joyful note, June J. is pleased, that despite Covid, she is now able to visit husband Johnny daily at his long-term care home. Granddaughter Chelsea is living with her and helps out in many ways. Noteworthy was Ken L.'s trip to London to be part of a Covid wedding. The groom was Ken's grandson. We are certain this was Ken's first Covid wedding.

UUFO history was made on November 23 when two members of the Caring Circle graduated from the Pastoral Care Training Program. Another member is registered for the January course.

UUFO Summer Outdoor Walking Meditations... A Unique Experience!

Isobel B

Over the summer a group of fellowship members have been meeting biweekly to enjoy the tranquil experience of outdoor walking meditation. Marie Claire and I coordinated the walks and chose places both within and outside the City limits. As Mark and I have explored many beautiful walks and hikes over the years we agreed to plan the walks, while Marie Claire looked after the communications. And what a delight it has been, during this most difficult time of Covid 19. Thich Nhat Hanh perfectly describes our walks in his poem which is included below. The rhythmic action of walking through contemplation of nature provides a wonderfully calming spiritual experience.



Hiking Photo: Nick, Elenor, and Fran near Carman Lake
Photo by Mark M

Each time we gathered, we began with a check in where everyone, who cared too, could talk about how their week had been. Then Marie Claire invited everyone to set an intention if they wished. I then read a poem. We set out slowly and mindfully. We walked silently for between 30 and 45 minutes after which we gathered for a chat and snacks. We were blessed with wonderful weather on every walk.

We began on June 19th with a short hike in Gatineau Park to Brown's Cabin where we had lunch. Returning we all enjoyed walking and talking back to the cars. There were 6 of us on this first walk. Every two weeks we went to a different spot; the Fletcher Wildlife Garden in the Arboretum, Rockcliffe Park and the Rockeries, the Mackenzie King Estate, the grounds of Rideau Hall, Mer Bleu, the Wakefield-Fairbairn House Heritage Centre, Beechwood Cemetery, a walking trail in the Green Belt, and lastly on November 7th a walk in Stanley Park In New Edinburgh. On the last walk there were 12 people!

There is something wonderfully reassuring about silent walking meditation with a group of like-minded people. Words are not required. I believe, I hope, it reduces loneliness during these troubling times with being unable to gather safely indoors. Outdoors we can cautiously appreciate companionship without restrictions, enjoying smiles of friendship and support.

Walking Meditation

Thich Nhat Hanh

...Walk and touch peace every moment.

Walk and touch happiness every moment.

Each step brings a fresh breeze.

Each step makes a flower bloom under our feet...



October 10 Walking Meditation – Photo by Janet C

You can read the rest of this poem [here](#).

A Solstice Reflection

E.N. Hill

According to various sources, Winter Solstice is an astronomical phenomenon marking the day with shortest period of daylight and the longest period night or darkness of the year. In many Wiccan traditions, this holy day is celebrated as Yule, the moment when God & Goddess have completed their annual cycle of life and now begin again. Upon reflection of my own annual cycle of life, I couldn't help but remember the longest night of my year. An inner journey spanning many weeks. An aggregate of moments in the metaphoric darkest night of my soul.

This long period was my path to growth, although I didn't know it at the time. I basically I got a head start on the changing season. I went through a spiritual version of winter solstice before the physical earth caught up to my inner world. Has any one else ever experienced such a thing? A moment when your spirit has feels as cold as winter in the middle of June? Or maybe your heart feels like its bursting with the abundance of fall's harvest but the calendar is far from that season. Do y'all know what I'm talking about? If you don't, that's cool too, just stay with me on this journey.

The bottom line of what I'm attempting to connect is: I recently went through an experience that upon reflection, I recognized as a period of annual completion. Like the God & Goddess of Yule, I had embarked on a spiritual cycle through seasons. Moving through the cold nights in valleys and shadows proved to be a necessary part of the process. I found that winter is needed for completion and growth. I learned darkness is a necessity for a balanced process of natural development.

I want share a passage that illustrates my point. The text is courtesy of Margaret Guenther, it is taken from Seasons in Spiritual Direction. In the text, the author uses a story from a gardening magazine to uplift the usefulness of darkness in "God's great economy." She shares:

A reader, who live din the heart of the city with a tiny terrace garden had asked "Why don't my morning glories bloom?" The expert's answer was simple: "They can't bloom in the city because there is



Winter Landscape (Carpatian Mountains) - Astrophotography - Photo by Standret via freepik

...A Solstice Reflection continued...

not enough darkness. They are coded genetically to respond to alternation of light and dark, and the unnatural light of the city prevents the natural development of the plant. Too much brightness interferes with the sequence of seasons.

As a person tending to take great efforts of being optimistic and looking for the "bright side of things," I was initially put off by the idea of too much brightness interfering with anything. The language of my personal faith expresses divinity as light, my spiritual name, Nehyir, (the N. of E.N.) means sacred illumination from God. I am charged with a mission to resist darkness by radiating holy luminesce!

And then I got it. Despite the truth of my many affirmations of Blackness, in relation to diasporic African identities and beyond, I'd in other ways been resistant to darkness. Resistant to the absence of light. Resistant to the essence of night. To the season of fallowness, the period of time that facilitates rest and regeneration of life. I'd even been resistant to myself... I'd been fighting against my inner darkness, the lustrous jet blackness of my Eboni soul (ebony as in both the the color and as the E. of E.N.)

I realized, life, which is the truest manifestation of divine Light, requires darkness. It needs it to grow and move through its natural cycles of living. Life develops through the balance of midnight and sunlight.



Breathtaking Colours Dancing in the Night Sky - Winter Wonderland – photo by Wirestock via freepik.com

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