

Fellowship News

Infolettre RUUO



Spring Issue / Édition du printemps – Mar 2021



"Brown Wooden Pathway on Brown Grass Field" – Photo by Avi Calvar Martinez via pexels.com

Boardwalk

Brandon M

This winter has been starkly different in many ways. But the life of UUFO carries on. The Worship Cluster has been planning and leading engaging Sunday services as usual. Thanks to the members of Rassemblement Francohone, our annual winter solstice service was held in-person and over Zoom.

In January, E.N.'s Spirit of Life workshops came to an end, with many participants eager to maintain the connections they had formed. E.N. is now holding another adult religious education class, No More Kyriarchy, which aims to dispel "ism's." E.N.'s work has helped our Fellowship to remain vibrant in these strange times. These past few months, it may have felt like every day is the same – but changes are indeed happening. Laura Evans has taken the initiative to bring back our monthly theme discussions. Sarah Baxter, our regular office administrator, will be returning to work in April. Allison Armstrong has accepted a position as communications director for First Unitarian – congratulations Allison! In addition, the board approved a request by the Social Action Cluster to start a "refugee support fund." This fund was inspired specifically to support Flaming

Chalice International, an organization started by Rev. Fulgence, who spoke at UUFO last year. In future the Refugee Support Fund could also be used to disburse donations to other organizations that sponsor or support refugees. Donations to the fund will be separate from regular contributions.

Spring is around the corner, and with it comes the time for Annual General Meetings. The Fellowship's AGM has been scheduled for June 6th. The CUC will be holding a conference this year – details are forthcoming. Talk is afoot of holding a celebration once it is safe to do so. As the days get longer, UUFO springs into hope.

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Cercle de croissance spirituelle

Lucie Marie C B

Notre Cercle est toujours de plus en plus riche de partage spirituel, intime et personnel. Depuis le printemps dernier notre Cercle a doublé. Nous avons dû nous adapter sur zoom, grâce à notre accueillante hôtesse, Marie-Claire.

Toutefois ce sera un vrai bonheur que de se retrouver en personnes, dans le jardin, lorsque le beau temps nous le permettra. Entre temps, nous continuons de donner notre écoute profonde à chaque personne et nos échanges sont toujours stimulants et appropriés à notre vie présente.

Pour le moment, nos rencontres sont le premier jeudi du mois à midi trente. Contact : Lucie-Marie



"Water Drops in Bowl" by The High Fin Sperm Whale
Photo via Wikimedia Commons



Friday night wind down

Michel J



Our Friday night wind downs take place on the first Friday of the month at 6:30 pm. It is an open discussion event similar to the Sunday coffee hour at noon. We have had some fun and interesting discussions and welcome new attendees any time. People can have a drink or eat some food while participating as this is our zoom equivalent to the Friday night pub nights we used to have and will have again eventually.



Célébrations francophones mensuelles

Lucie-Marie C B

le quatrième dimanche du mois à midi, pour le moment sur zoom. Merci à notre gracieuse hôtesse Claire.

Chacune de nos célébrations a vraiment un cachet bien particulier tout en respectant notre rituel de la lumière, nos joies et peines ainsi que le thème du mois lorsque cela convient. Tout comme dans le Cercle de croissance spirituelle nous tâchons d'accorder à chacun(e) l'écoute, le temps de partage et l'expérience concrète que nous suggère l'animatrice ou l'animateur. Quel stimulant et enrichissement pour les participants(e)s! Toutefois je dois avouer que l'animation et la participation devient « un ». Nous nous sentons tous responsables.

Prochaines célébrations francophones :

28 Mars - thème : La communauté

25 Avril - thème : La compassion

23 Mai - thème : Imagination/ Créativité

27 Juin - thème : Gratitude et rétroaction

**Grand merci aux animatrices et animateurs
passés et à venir :**

**Urbain, Maurice ,Claire, Fran,
Suzanne, Gustavo...**

Continuity & Change: UUFO History at a Glance

Mark Mueller



At UUFO it is a tradition that newly elected Board members go on a retreat to consider priorities and plans for the coming year. Here you see the 2007-08 Board doing just that. They are taking a break from their busy schedule to have a photo taken for posterity. They are: bottom row: Marlene H., Gilles M., Marilyn K., standing in the center Daphne McC., upper row: Mark M., Dale F., Martha N., Rev. Frances D., Elaine L., Don McD.



UUFO Film Club

Michel Jan

Our movie discussions now take place once a month on the second Friday at 6:30 p.m.

We had good meetings discussing "The Life Ahead" in December. This film was with Sophia Loren and available on Netflix. We all felt that Sophia Loren did well and the story was moving. The film is about a woman that looks after the children of sex workers and centres around her relationship with one particular boy.

In January we discussed "Funny Boy" a film by Deepa Mehta. The story was about a young man from when he was a boy up to when he is an adult and his dealing with his sexual orientation while Bangladesh is at war.

In February we discussed "The Windermere Children" about a group of children survivors of the holocaust being rehabilitated at a school in England. This film and "Funny Boy" are available on CBC Gem. Some of us felt that "The Windermere Children" was not always realistic. It was still an enjoyable feel good film. We always welcome new participants for our movie discussions.



Book Review: *The Circle Broken* (Judith Lishman)

Mark Mueller

Imagine a teenager around 1885 at Fort Qu'Appelle (now Saskatchewan) meeting the great chiefs of the Plains Cree such as Chief Starblanket, Chief Big Bear and Chief Sitting Bull, as well as Metis leaders Gabriel Dumont and Louis Riel! Her name was Eliza who kept a journal which forms the foundation of this historical novel. Eliza, daughter of the Hudson's Bay Co. chief trader William James Mclean, was a witness to the tragic destruction of indigenous lives, culture, loss of land, loss of livelihood, starvation, humiliation, and treachery by the federal government of the day. She recorded these events including the arbitrary actions of an infamous Indian agent. Eliza had learned the ways and customs of the Cree from her mother who was part indigenous. She was fluent in Cree and as an interpreter for her father had gained the respect of several area chiefs. In a peace pipe ceremony, she was 'adopted' as an Indian Princess.

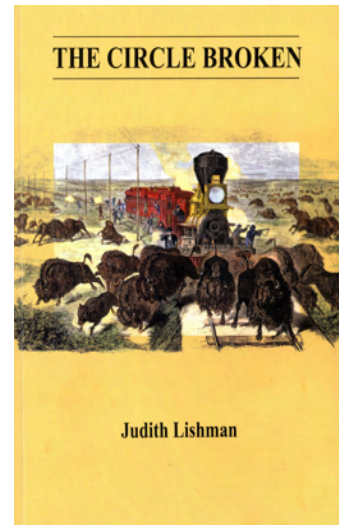
You will learn the significance of the Sundance Ceremony and the excruciating pain young warriors endured for their vision quest. The buffalo, which had sustained the Plains Cree for 10,000 years, were wiped out. This tragedy led to their starvation and the destruction of their way of life.

The circle between the buffalo and the people was indeed broken. The federal government withheld desperately needed food supplies despite promises to the contrary. The Metis also felt the pressures of colonization. The encroachment of settlers on land they had occupied and cultivated for a long time, led to the Battle of Batoche and the eventual hanging of Louis Riel.

We meet Eliza as the family is about to leave Fort Qu'Appelle for Fort Pitt where her father had been appointed chief factor of the HBC trading post. This journey which today would take some 6 hours by car (630 km) took the family some 6 weeks. Tensions around Fort Pitt mounted between local chiefs and the authorities, and she and her family were kidnapped and held hostage by desperate members of Chief Big Bear's band who sought protection from government troops. You will feel the tension as they travel as captives with these warriors.

The author gives Eliza a credible voice about the events she encounters and conveys them with great sensitivity. Eliza remains a teenager, but she is conscious of the momentous changes the Plains Cree experienced and continued to encounter. It is the destruction of their way of life and Eliza conveys this with great respect. At that time, children were taken away from local bands as John A. McDonald had agreed to the residential school system as an additional instrument to "civilize the Indians." Even though familiar with the events of that period from various sources, I found the book touching and an eloquent reminder of what we lost as a people by these destructive actions of our forebears. I recommend this book highly.

Judith Lishman is part of the Unitarian Fellowship of Ottawa. Her book is available at Books on Beechwood or by contacting Judith at dlishman@sympatico.ca.



"Chard Sprouts"—Photo by Aaron Fernando via unsplash.com

Deux nouveautés en français

Maurice C-P

La gamme d'activités offertes aux francophones et francophiles du Rassemblement UU d'Ottawa continue de se développer.

Depuis le mois de janvier, le **Groupe de discUussion** propose des sujets liés à l'engagement UU envers la justice sociale. Le sort des réfugiés, la violence faite aux femmes, le racisme systémique et toutes autres préoccupations pourront mériter notre attention. Pandémie oblige, les rencontres se font, pour le moment par Zoom. Dans la tradition UU d'*Action sociale* nous allons, dans la mesure du possible, identifier des gestes que les gens peuvent poser pour donner suite à nos palabres. Nous avons déjà par exemple, avec les membres anglophones du *Social Action Cluster*, participé à une campagne d'*Amnistie internationale*.

Aussi, pour encourager la distribution de matériel en français les gens peuvent afficher un message (une « *activité* ») sur Facebook dans le **Groupe du Regroupement francophone Unitarien Universaliste (RFUU)**. Ces messages peuvent être de nature sociale, spirituelle, bref peuvent avoir un rapport avec un des sept principes UU ou une de nos préoccupations. Si vous désirez participer à l'une et/ou l'autre de ces activités et vous n'êtes pas déjà inscrit/e/s, ou pour nous faire parvenir vos importants commentaires et suggestions, envoyez un courriel à Maurice au cp4@videotron.ca.

UUFO Theme Discussions

Laura E

Face it! We Unitarians love to talk.

The Workshop Cluster comes up with a theme for the services each month. Last year we had started to hold a discussion circle once a month after service to discuss the month's theme. The Women's group adopted the themes to guide their discussions. Maybe there were other groups that also took the opportunity to delve deeper into the topic. So here we are a year later, and re-launching a forum to discuss the monthly theme. What better way to start the year than with a discussion in January of Hope? By the time this is published we will also have discussed Courage. We have settled on meeting on the fourth Tuesday of the month, at 7pm.

The zoom link is published in Friday Notes the week before the discussion. In fact it is the same zoom link each time, for those who want to put the link into an electronic calendar. Join in! Let's talk about our monthly theme and integrate it into our lives.

Our Upcoming Dates

Tuesday March 23

Tuesday April 27

Tuesday May 25

Tuesday June 22



"Gallery View" – Photo by Chris Montgomery
Via unsplash.com



"Crocuses" – Photo by Chris Montgomery via unsplash.com

The art of life lies in a constant readjustment to our surroundings.

Kakuzō Okakura, The Book of Tea

Meditation Circle

Marie-Claire B

Isobel and I enjoyed planning and going on our meditation walks over the past few months. Mother nature must have approved since we never cancelled due to poor weather. We are now entering another phase in our meditation journey, and we hope to resume our gathering in person at UUFO soon.

While we continued our Silent Walking Meditation through December, we cancelled our winter plans for mindful skating, skiing, snowshoeing when we returned to lockdown on December 26. Circumstances necessitate adjustments and the Walking Meditation participants became a second meditation group.

Now, our Meditation Circles meet on Zoom, two Saturdays a month, and follow the format established by Evangeline last March, when we changed from meeting in-person to meeting on Zoom. We continue to meet for an hour alternating between check-ins, poems, readings, music, and meditations at the organizers' pleasure and reflect teachings by Thich Nhat Hanh and other mindfulness teachers. We are now humbly asking for volunteers to help lead our circle, and offer a special thank you to Lucie-Marie and Gustavo, who have facilitated two sessions.



November 21 – The hill behind Wakefield Cemetery
After Walking Meditation - Photo by Marie-Claire B



"Green Leafed Plants" – Photo by Markus Spiske via unsplash.com

UUFO Music Night

Michel B

When I was eighteen and Friday came around, let me tell you that I had it all planned out. I didn't leave anything to chance fearing that I'd miss out on a good party or an exciting date. So I'd gathered my intelligence during the week from my reliable buddies as to who was doing what, and who was going where, so that my weekend had a proper start-up. I left nothing to chance. Now that I'm no longer eighteen, although some people tell me that I still act like I am, I still plan my Friday nights lest I miss out on something exciting – such as the UUFO Friday Music Night. So what is this Friday Music Night anyway? Well, for one thing it used to be called The Happy Hour Hootenany, and also went by the name Open Mic.



"Let It Be" – Screenshot of Michel B Performing

All of this is confusing because in a Hootennany one hoots and howls – and we all know that we can't hoot and howl during a zoom event because it causes distortion, feed back, angry zoom-jockeys and confused participants. Besides, you'll get muted or worse, kicked out by the zoom police. So that leaves Open Mic, but for open mic to work you need a consistent flow of open-mikers, other wise you end one with just performer who monopolizes the mic. Therefore: Friday Music Night. It's much more participatory, collaborative, cooperative, eclectic, and divers. At least this is what we are hoping.

So how will this work? Well, we pick a host (so far that's me – remember I'm still eighteen at heart) who canvasses the Friday regulars (my favorite UUFO music buddies) a few weeks before the Friday in question. We decide what the theme will be and discuss ideas on the format and musical contributions. Sounds good so far! But what really happens during the two hour event?

Well here's what has been happening so far: We have had live music from several musicians. We've also had a musical video played during the event so we know we can do that. We've also had some discussions about music. But I envision more. I imagine an audience who aren't necessarily musicians but who have a great appreciation of music, and I mean all kinds of music. I can imagine contributions on musical topics sent to the host before the event in order to prepare and develop the theme which could be classical, country, folk, jazz, pop, or an entire evening dedicated to a particular song writer, performer, or composer. All of this means preparation and a desire to make it happen. I don't have the intelligence on this yet but we'll just have to give it a try.

It'll all be on zoom and from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM, on the fourth Friday of the month. Watch for its announcement in the UUFO Friday Notes.

See you there,
Michel Boudreau



"Turntables" – Jernej Graj via unsplash.com

A Writing Journey

allison c

When I give writing workshops I have three rules, from William Zinsser: “Write the truth. Do not censor yourself. Think small”. When you are writing, you are in a safe place. There is the page, your pen (or keyboard), and you; nothing in this triad will betray you. (Unless you are on email. But that is another topic).

As a little girl I did not know any writers, but still, I wondered if I could become one, even though it meant you had to be really smart. I have since learned that writing does not come from a big brain, it comes from imagination, a sense of order, and a knack for paying attention. These items are available to everybody in this room—to pay attention, to put things in order, and to imagine.

I could read before I went to school, which didn’t seem remarkable at the time. Alphabet blocks, a copy of the United Church hymnal, and cereal boxes were enough material for a kid to figure out words.

I got my first sentences from magazines. This tagline on the cover of *Popular Mechanics*, “Written so you can understand it,” invited me into the universe of the written word. Contents listed on the April 1960 edition included: sheltered patios, barbecue equipment, and solving crimes by hypnosis. Come on. I was in like Flynn.

The game got better when my Grannie moved from Bermuda to Canada when I was 7. That year for Christmas, she gave us “*The Readers’ Digest Treasury for Young Readers*.” She gave it to all six of us Miller kids, but, really, it was mine.

Puzzles, word games, tricks of language, riddles, quizzes, crosswords, and stories. I wore that book out. I remember one story by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, wherein Sherlock Holmes deduces the origin of the woman in his office because he observed red dust on her skirt. That red dust could only come from the soil on the coast between Torquay and Otterton. After spending those few minutes in Sherlock Holmes’ office with that woman from the Devon Redlands, I decided that I would learn: to observe, and to deduce—both useful skills for the writer.

My school had a library, and I was allowed to take out 7 books every Thursday afternoon. I did not want to lose any play-time, and so I read library books after I went to bed, under the covers, with a flashlight. I remember withdrawing every one in a series of biographies, because they were new, and covered in a beautiful cellophane. Though I had been seduced by the colour and feel of those books, it was the essence of the great citizens within the pages that got into me. Marie Curie. Louis Pasteur. Harriet Tubman. William Osler. Elizabeth Fry.

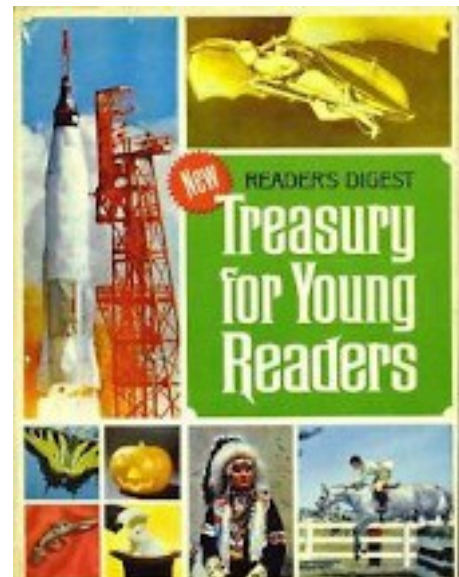


Photo provided by allison c

Continued on Pg 9...

I found writing school compositions to be very hard. Once in grade 8, the topic was the colour green. I struggled, and finally, my mother stepped in with this final line: "Looking up and down the St. John River Valley, I realize what a good colour God has chosen for leaves and grass." Mrs. DeLong gave me an A, and got me to read that essay out loud to the class. But I never felt good about it. I figured it was my mother's envoi that got me that A. And I am still not sure of myself. When somebody likes what I have written, I say thank you, but part of me is looking around, thinking maybe they mean somebody else's sentences.

I have dozens of journals—nothing in them worth reading—but those pages receive the outpouring of my heart. I am practicing truth, not censoring, and thinking small. One page, one pen, one small thought. It is hard to call myself a writer. I will say, though, that I work at making a good sentence, or a good line in a poem. I like the finished piece to be trim, and not floppy. As with lace, you have to leave out a whole lot for it to look pretty. Go for the shape.

We can all write. We can all write a journal, for practice. And, most importantly, we can all write a letter. Deeply written, deeply received, the letter is the purest form of writing.

UUFO Welcome and Membership Committee

Hoppy R

The Welcome and Membership Committee is looking forward to the time when we can again open our real doors, step beyond the virtual world and begin to greet people again in our sanctuary. We have little news at the moment other than to again thank Lucie-Marie Castonguay-Bower for her many years leading this little committee. Lucie-Marie has been a member of our Fellowship for over 20 years and has always been a smiling and welcoming presence greeting newcomers, visitors and members in both English and French!



"Snowdrops" – Photo by Aaron Burden via unsplash.com

The Welcome and Membership Committee will be doing some planning, probably by Zoom over the next few months in preparation for our re-opening, hopefully in September. In the meantime, please feel free to contact any of us on the committee with any suggestions, questions or if you think you may be interested in joining this committee in the fall!

Hoppy Roy (English) hoppyroy@gmail.com

Carolle Séguin (English and French) 4carolle@gmail.com

Andrea Young – (English and French) andreamkentyoung@gmail.com

From the Caring Circle

By Mark M

It has been a year of the pandemic. The year has been full of insecurity and uncertainty remains for the year ahead. Isolation, lack of physical human contact and being together with friends and family made many of us sad, lonely and in need of being in touch with other congregants

The Caring Circle has been active and is reaching out to some 40 members a month. We reach people by phone for a friendly chat or send a card to recognize a joy or sorrow. When needed we take members to medical appointments and transport pets and owners to animal clinics. The Monthly Caring Contact and members of the Caring Circle share this rewarding engagement with congregants. Do you have ideas how the Caring Circle can help 'create community' under these unusual circumstances? Let us know. If you wish to be part of this caring community contact Mark.

In the December Newsletter it was noted that people were on the move. Covid or not, this has continued in the last several months. Rod O moved to a senior's residence. He, by the way, is grateful for the telephone calls he receives and encourages you to continue. The Caring Circle is in touch with him every three days. Don & Louise McD were obliged to move again within Perth at the end of January for health reasons and are now comfortably settled in their new apartment. In February they celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary. Congratulations to you both! Beverlee M also moved to a senior's residence near Prince of Wales Drive. Another major milestone was reached by our Minister emeritus Fred C who, in January, celebrated his 95th birthday locked down in Maxville. Bonnie has the key to the lock.

We are grateful for the caring by Monthly Caring Contacts Frances C, Marilyn K, and Andrea Y in January, February, and March respectively, and welcome Ken L as Caring Contact in April.

Reflections:

From Winter Towards Spring

By Intern Minister E.N.

Dec 2020

O' Majestic Primordial Blackness, you birthed planets, moons, entire galaxies, and all beings. Thank you for the blessing of our bodies born of Your heavenly body. We are divine likenesses of you. Like spring out of winter, our brightness emerged out of darkness. Born as microcosms of the cosmological universe, beautifully made from light... May our flesh crafted from stardust be a protective shield against all harm. May our blood of galactic water be pure and nourishing. May our breath of holy wind be strong and easy flowing. May our spirit of sacred fire burn brighter than the sun and never die. We, living elements of the cosmos, are but a fraction of Life. May we remember from whence we came and give greater honour to the universe that sustains all seasons.

Feb 2021

Thinking of a seed buried and blanketed beneath snow. Imaging the life inside the seed.... Howard Thurman has said, "meaning is inherent in life," implying life itself has a purpose. Separate from the vessel containing the life force -the energy, the essence, the inner breath of the thing, bears its own significance. Thurman said "wherever life appears, it carries with it meaning, which is characteristic of all vitality. Life means inherent order, built-in goals, purposes, patterns, or designs." How beautiful it is to consider the pulse of one's being beating to offer a cadence for the internal unfolding of life. Beyond the puppeteering or animation of the body, one's vitality finds value in simply serving itself. A flower blooming unobserved, unpollinated, untouched by hand, paw, or tiny insect feet -stands majestically for its own benefit before bowing its peddled face to the earth, kissing the ground, and merging with it.



Grape Hyacinths with Tulip – Photo by Maciej Opaliński via Wiki Free Images

Reflections on “Spirit of Life: Workshops Exploring Universalist Spirituality”

By Intern Minister E.N.

From November 18th to January 20th, I had the pleasure of facilitating nine “Spirit of Life” workshops, a UUA Tapestry of Faith program created by Barbara Hamilton-Holway. Each week between 15-20 people from UUFO, FirstU, Ottawa community, Florida, Texas, even as far as India and the United Kingdom, gathered and explore what spirituality means to us. Through deep listening, reflection, and small group discussions, participants connected to their own sense of what is sacred. Most surprising, my deeply Christian mother joined the sessions and told me her perspective of God expanded “after being with a group of UUs.” There were so many moments of awe and profound richness that I find it difficult to fully describe it in words. However, for the last workshop, I composed a poem to share with the participants and now I’m sharing it with all of you. I’d also like to give a special thanks to Michel for inviting me to lead the program and to Brandon for faithfully serving as Zoom support. I’m extremely grateful for the experience, I hope my words convey the depth of my appreciation. (Words are based on lyrics from Carolyn McDade’s Spirit of Life)

The Great Spirit of Life has come to this community

Moved not by hands -but by faces
By voices within our sacred gathering
Each participant’s name like a song of my heart
Your presence was deep like roots of the tree
I’m grateful for your compassion, your care, your interest,
Your reflections, and shared vulnerability
I’ve been blessed by your gifts, your experiences
And different perspectives you bring
I’ve grown and developed as a minister
You’ve inspired unfurling of my wings
My prayer is that each of you found benefit
That you enjoyed Wednesdays with us
I pray your hearts and minds have expanded
That your spirit feels free and filled with more love
Thank you dear friends, thank you dear mother
No words can express what you have meant
I will end this workshop overjoyed
feeling full and pleased with time well spent.



Charter Sunday, March 17, 1996 – Photo from Helmut Kuhn via Sally Olsen

Sing Along with Coronaviruns Blues

Lyrics and music by Katie Lunn and Michel Boudreau©

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| E F | E F |
| I woke up one morning | heard the bad news. |
| E F | E F |
| Surrounded by pandemic | it gave me the blues. |
| E F | E F |
| Made me want to cry, | made me want to should |
| E F | E F |
| Knew my life had changed | in an instant no doubt . |
| E F | E F |
| I caught the last meetup, | allowed out for a while . |
| E F | F7 |
| Got home not too late | had really lost my smile. |

CHORUS

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|-----------|--|
| F7 | A# | A# | F | |
| I' VE GOT THE CORONAVIRUS | BLUES | IT'S GOT ME ALL | CONFUSED. | |
| F | C7 | A# | F | |
| SO COME ON HONEY BABY, | YOU' VE GOT TO KEEP ME | AMUSED. | | |

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| E F | E F |
| It's now been nine months, | same day different shit. |
| E F | E F |
| I' ll tell you right now | I' m really sick of it. |
| E F | E F |
| Zoom just don' t cut it | what I need are my friends. |
| E F | E F |
| Too many people died, | could this be the end. |
| E F | E F |
| We can have outside visits, | well that's fine with me. |
| E F | F7 |
| But when the cold snap hits, | it' ll be pure misery. |

Return to CHORUS

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| E F | E F |
| Well looks like right now, | we' ve hit a second wave . |
| E F | E F |
| That's not a good sign, | why can' t we behave. |
| E F | E F |
| How long will this last, | nobody knows. |
| E F | E F |
| Could this be forever, | man that would really blow. |
| E F | E F |
| So come on everybody, | we're all in this together. |
| E F | F7 |
| Let's hope that very soon, | things will get better. |

Return to CHORUS x2

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