



NANAIMO UNITARIAN NEWS

First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo (FUFON)

595 Townsite Rd. Nanaimo BC, V9S 1K9 Tel. 250-755-1215

www.ufon.ca

January 2018 Edition

Sunday Services in January

Services start at 11:00am

All are welcome

See inside for more

details and bios

January 7

Can Atheism and Spirituality Be Friends?

Presented by Reinie Heydemann

January 14

Setting the Table

Presented by Paul Manly

January 21

One Unitarian's Search for the Meaning of Life

Presented by Craig Jackson

January 28

Is it Okay to Believe in Miracles?

Presented by Russell McNeil

Upcoming Events

Daytimers January 5th

Bottle Drive January 6th

Soul Matters January 20th

Table of Contents

	Page(s)
Sunday Services	2-3
Consulting Minister	4-5
Board Bitz	6
Soul Matters	7-8
Fellowship Updates	9-11

MISSION STATEMENT

*At FUFON we create spiritual connection and bring compassion,
discovery and social justice to life.*



Sunday Speakers

January 7

Can Atheism and Spirituality Be Friends?

Presented by Reinie Heydemann

Reinie Heydemann will share some of her life stories from growing up as a faithful Lutheran, studying theology, being a minister and serving in a nursing home as a chaplain until she retired and instantly joined the Unitarians, which gave her the opportunity to develop spirituality as an atheist.



Reinie Heydemann is no stranger to FUFON. She has been a member since moving to Nanaimo in 2002, and has participated with the Membership Committee, the Life Journey Singers and also as a Lay Chaplain. Her background is Lutheran, being a chaplain in a nursing home in Edmonton, until it was time to retire and join the Unitarians. She lives now on Salt Spring Island.

January 14

Setting the Table

Presented by Paul Manly

Are you a senior who has a great idea for a food related video and would like to learn about the process of video production? Do you have a story related to food that you would like to share, a community group working on food security that you volunteer with, a passion for food that you want to share? Setting the Table is a community documentary project of Nanaimo Foodshare led by documentary and educational filmmaker Paul Manly. Seniors are trained in video productions and then document food related stories, experiences, passions and community involvement of other seniors, creating a series of short videos that will be distributed on the internet and broadcast on community TV.



Paul has twenty-five years of experience working in video and television production and has been making documentaries and educational videos about topics that interest him, issues he is passionate about and stories that he wants to share. He will share a couple of the short videos that have been completed as part of the Setting the Table project and talk about what drives him as a filmmaker.



Sunday Speakers

January 21

One Unitarian's Search for the Meaning of Life

Presented by Craig Jackson

People have questioned the meaning of life as long as any record exists. We have found many answers, some of which are contradictory. I looked at it as something from which we could eliminate the wrong paths without worrying about which path is "right" and found some answers that Unitarians may find familiar.

Craig moved to Nanaimo at the end of August, and found FUFON at the end of September. He teaches science at a high school, and hopes to bring his family out next year.



January 28

Is it Okay to Believe in Miracles?

Presented by Russell McNeil

In one of her many visions, the 12th century mystic Hildegard of Bingen described, in words, painting, and in music, her impressions on the structure of the universe, or the "cosmos" as she observed it through her "divinely inspired" mind's eye. She saw, painted and sang about a universe that was actually quite foreign to her medieval world (but interestingly more acceptable to moderns). Hildegard unveiled a universe in the shape of an "egg", surrounded by a blinding bright "fire," that continuously spawned fierce galactic style "whirlwinds." What was the real nature of those visions? Were they miracles, or the delusions of a migraine sufferer? An alternate possibility is that her visions (and many similar accounts from other cultures over thousands of years) are not only truly "spiritual" or "transcendent" events, but that the transcendence experience itself can be understood in rational and scientific terms. If so, experiences, such as those reported by mystics like Hildegard, might be accessible to – at least theoretically - any "rightly disposed" human being. What does being "rightly disposed" require of us?



Russell McNeil's PhD studies pioneered a LIDAR technology which was later deployed to measure the atmosphere of Mars ("Phoenix" mission, 2010). His work as a science journalist included documentaries for PBS and work in News for CBC TV and Radio. Russell's Liberal Studies teaching career at VIU included an interest in Greek philosophy. His book "The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius, Selections Annotated and Explained" was published in 2008. Russell is certified as a Personal Trainer and currently teaches classes in Nanaimo at several gyms. His life-long passion for photography can be seen in several works on display on "Gallery Row" in Nanaimo.



From Our Consulting Minister

Connecting

I wish you a very Happy and Healthy 2018!

Life is precious and each moment we have offers an opportunity to transcend our own day-to-day worries and be reminded of the beauty of the gift of life itself. Being part of a caring community, such as FUFON, also gives us opportunities to transcend our own pre-occupations and find ways to connect in meaningful ways with each other. If you want to find ways to connect at FUFON, please contact Ruth Anderson, the *Let's Connect* Coordinator. Ruth has a wonderful ability to help people discern their own interests and passions and connect you to places in FUFON that might fit your skills and interests and the fellowship's activities that can put our Unitarian principles into action - whether you are new to the community or have been here for many years! (See Ruth's columns in the newsletters.)

As I mentioned in my last newsletter column, I am in the cast of Theatre for Living's forum play **šxʷ?amət (home)** which explores what true and honourable reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians looks like. We are touring through BC and Alberta (with a final run in Vancouver), so I will be on an unpaid leave of absence from my FUFON work from January 1 – March 31.

I'm excited that we will be performing the play in Nanaimo on Sunday, January 21, 7:30pm at the Snuneymuxw Recreation & Wellness Centre, 1145 Totem Road. For more information, call 250-591-0933. If you want to let those you know in BC and Alberta know the dates we may be coming to their location, please send them to: http://www.theatreforliving.com/present_work/sxwPamet/index.html

I look forward to seeing you at a performance or when I return the weekend of April 20-21.

May this hibernation time of year bring you opportunities for rest and renewal as well as personal and spiritual connections.

Understanding a Collegial Covenant

In November, I was very grateful to be able to welcome as a new FUFON member, my Unitarian ministerial colleague, Rev. Frances Deverell and her husband Ron Wilson. As a retired Unitarian minister (who also does community ministry in areas of social justice), Frances is a supportive colleague as I find ways to best support your Fellowship in my consulting ministry.

As part of our Unitarian Universalist Minister Association Guidelines for the Conduct of Ministry (Covenant, Code of Conduct, and Standards of Professional Practice), she and I created a covenant together. Since the Fellowship contracted me to serve the congregation professionally, it is standard practice to let the congregation know how to relate to the retired ministers among us so they are able to enjoy being members (rather than being approached to engage in ministry-type work within the congregation).

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From Our Consulting Minister

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The goal of the covenant is:

- To facilitate a stable and united congregation which honours its past and moves forward into the future.
- To establish a process for a full and free interchange between the Consulting Minister and the Retired Minister to enrich their relationship with one another in their respective ministries and to avoid any possible misunderstandings or difficulties in advance of their arising.
- To clarify this relationship of Unitarian Universalist ministers living and/or serving in Nanaimo and provide policy and protocol guidelines, and to strengthen the presence of Unitarian Universalism in Nanaimo.

One of the ways retired ministers serve the congregation they are part of is to occasionally offer a Sunday service (and the incumbent minister invites them to do that). Frances and I agreed that having her lead a Sunday service once this year is a great way to offer a contribution to the fellowship, and I'm so grateful she was able to do that the first Sunday in December. She is finding other relaxing ways to be of service within the community, through making coffee, helping out at the shelter, and bringing information about social justice issues she thinks might interest the fellowship for the social issues table on Sundays.

Because Frances serves on the board of the Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice, she may, from time to time, be making public statements on social justice concerns from that role. She agrees to always make it clear that she speaks for CUSJ and not for FUFON.

It is standard practice that ministers who are attending (but not professionally engaged by a congregation) may attend all congregational meetings but will not speak to issues that deal with administration or personnel matters (including about professional ministry), policies, budgets, and procedures; nor serve on any committee except at the request or approval of the minister who is presently serving the congregation. This is to help the leadership and the minister who they have engaged to work with them keep clear and direct communication; then the minister who is a member does not have to get into any triangles when asked their opinion on these kinds of issues. I'm lucky that Frances and I talk and I benefit from her experience with several different congregations in Canada and can share that with the leaders as seems appropriate when I provide my own counsel. Also, in their relationships with congregational members, it is expected that a retired minister will act as a friend and fellow member of the congregation (and not do any visiting or counselling in an "official" capacity). That allows them to build mutually beneficial connections with others (and not be in the role of just being a listener to other people's concerns).

So, I invite us all to support Frances to be able to relax and be a member here, and enjoy her retired status. FUFON is lucky to have her and Ron among you, and I know they bring caring hearts, generous spirits and willing hands to help with the work that is shared among us all. I hope you'll welcome them and get to know them better as time goes on and they settle into the community.

In the spirit,
Rev. Meg Roberts

Board Bitz

Board Goals in Progress:

Half Time Minister

Working towards engaging a half time minister, the board is exploring the Northern Lights Chalice Lighter Program. This is a major program that lets individual Canadian Unitarians and Universalists directly support special projects in congregations across the country. It is co-run by the Unitarian Universalist Ministers of Canada and the Canadian Unitarian Council.

To be a Chalice Lighter, you enroll in the program by pledging to give a dollar amount, of your choosing, once a year. Grant applications are accepted from congregations who have enrolled 20% of their membership in the Northern Lights program. For our Fellowship, that means only 14 of us.

If you can make a commitment, once a year, of \$25, \$50 or \$100 or more you can be a Chalice Lighter and help us apply for a grant.

We presently know of two Chalice Lighters in our Fellowship but there may be others unidentified. If you are a Chalice Lighter or you would like to become one please speak to a board member.

For more information go to <http://cuc.ca/northern-lights/>

Endorsement

I am a proud supporter of the Northern Lights initiative. The program succeeds in assisting congregations with the funding of projects that encourage growth and/or stability. I believe that Northern Lights gives us an opportunity to look outward to our fellow Unitarians and support them in a tangible way. Supporting ministry, program development and curriculum are just three categories I have gladly helped with my contributions in the past. I would like to encourage every Unitarian to join Northern Lights. Canadian Unitarianism will be stronger for it. If a congregation wished to apply for Northern Lights funding, twenty percent of the members must be Northern Lighters.

Please consider joining us in this movement.
Ron Wilson

Policy Handbook for FUFON

The board is calling for volunteers to a Task Force to examine existing policies and discuss updates and improvements. If you would like to volunteer for this or are asked to participate in this important work, we hope you will respond positively.

Kitchen Renovation

Katherine Ball presented drawings and conducted a tour of our kitchen area to explain the changes she proposes to make the space more convenient. Opportunities for stakeholders to view the plans and express their opinion and concerns will be announced.

The FUFON Board members wish all a Healthy and Prosperous New Year.



What does it mean to be a Community of Transcendence?

As we explore together the subject of Transcendence, we are entering into a realm where language can seem inadequate. Having an experience of transcendence cannot easily be explained or described because it is borne of our connection to mystery: God, Spirit, the One; that which passes all understanding.

And so we turn to the language of poetry, of music, of silence.

William Wordsworth wrote:

That blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened: — that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on —
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul;
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

What does becoming a "living soul" mean to you? How do you access the experience of transcendence? What are your portals? Is it prayer, meditation, music, poetry, nature? How do we create loving and supportive space to be in the mystery of transcendent experience together?

DAYTIMERS

Weather permitting, Daytimers Discussion Group will meet **Friday, January 5th**, for an around the table discourse of various perspectives.

We will convene at a new time: **1:00pm** in lieu of previous 2:00pm start time.





We meet once a month to deepen our exploration of the fellowship's monthly theme. Together, we practice guided spiritual reflection through sharing personal experiences in a supportive group that focuses on deeply listening to one another. We use the Soul Matters theme packet of materials sent out via email at the beginning of the month; there are also a few hard copies available on the first Sunday after the service. The packet includes a couple of options for a spiritual exercise as well as some questions—you choose one exercise to try out that month and one question to ponder. There are also optional readings, film suggestions, book titles, on-line videos included in the packet.

Because Rev. Meg Roberts is away January to March, the next three sessions will be facilitated by FUFON member, Faye Shedletzky.

The gatherings will be on one Saturday each month from 3:00 – 5:00 pm (dates to be announced).

The themes explored at these gatherings will be:

In January: **Transcendence**

In February: **Interdependence**

In March: **Risk**

If you could like to come and try it out to see if it is the kind of reflection from which you would benefit, please contact Lise Smith in the FUFON office for details (info@ufon.ca).

BRAVO!

Thank you fellow FUFONITES for making our Holiday Bake Sale such a huge success!

We cleared a record-breaking \$660! A huge thank you to those who baked, brought, and bought the delicious array of wonderful holiday foods! Added to our profit of \$111 from our 50/50 draw at the November Spaghetti Night, we now have almost raised \$800 toward our goal of \$3000 for the year, apart from the revenues we will also bring in through our annual Goods and Services auction which takes place in early June.

**A reminder that our first Bottle Drive launches on Saturday,
January 6th from 10 AM - 2 PM!!**

Drop off your bottles and cans to FUFON and let Julie know if you need yours picked up from your home. Another great way to support our FUFON Fellowship!

And keep saving your bottles and cans as we hope to repeat our bottle drives every other month.

Thank you again for all your support to help us raise funds toward the building maintenance costs and ministerial expenses of our Fellowship.

Your Fellowship Fund Raising Team:
Julie, Anita, Lois, Tony, Val, Suzanne, Hugh, Diane and Anne

Fundraising for FUFON

Recycle your refundables



Help raise money for FUFON


2 ways to go



#1 BOTTLE DROP

Drop off your bottles & cans at
2477 Kenworth Dr. (7am - 6:30pm)
2839 Old Victoria Rd. (8:30am - 6:30pm)
Mention FUFON when you drop them off

#2 BOTTLE DRIVE

Bring your recyclables to the Fellowship
the first Saturday of alternate months:
Jan 6; Mar 3; May 5; July 7; Sept 1
Drop off: 10am - 2pm



Volunteers needed to help receive and sort recyclables at the bottle drives -
contact Julie Rogers for info. (jrogers7@shaw.ca)

**All proceeds will be used to support
FUFON services and activities.**



Membership Matters

As we move into January, your Membership Team invites you to consider the many ways you contribute to the life and work of FUFON. You may not think of attending Sunday Services regularly as a contribution, but, being an active participant by attending as often as you are able is a way of serving the congregation. It allows you to join in community worship, perhaps you are asked to light the Chalice or take the offering; perhaps you have brought flowers to enhance our hall or brought pot-luck snacks for fellowship time following the service; perhaps you welcomed a visitor or newcomer and helped to familiarize them with our building; perhaps you sang in the choir or helped with the children's program. These are all ways we connect with one another; ways we nurture others and ourselves;. ways we serve our Fellowship. FUFONers are proud of our connections.

What better way to start the New Year than to reflect on your current practice of connection? The Membership Team acknowledges all that you do, and challenges you to consider if there might be other ways you would be able to connect in 2018? **Let our Mantra for 2018 be "Let's Connect"!!!**

Throughout 2018, may we all feel connected and grow in the many ways we support our FUFON community.

Your Membership Team,
Lise, Joan, Bev, Sandy, Ruth and Sharon

Inclement Weather Telephone Tree

With colder weather upon us, the membership team updated the Inclement Weather Telephone Tree.

If a decision is made to cancel a Sunday Service due to weather concerns, you will be contacted by a 'Friendly FUFON Phoner'.



Unitarian Universalist Islands Network

Happy New Year Island UUs!

The UUIIN spreads the word about upcoming events that are open to all interested Unitarian Universalists on Vancouver Island and surrounding Islands.

We are better together!

<http://viuc.unitariancongregation.org/>



Covenant of Right Relations

*In creating the beloved
community here at FUFON,
we remember that relationships are
more important than the issues*

We, the members and friends of FUFON, commit to:

- a) consider our personal responsibility in the community
- b) come from a place of compassion and integrity in our communications with others
- c) work to uplift congregational life
- d) be mindful of the breadth of diversity in our congregation
- e) engage in conflict respectfully

With the past year coming to a close and a new one ringing in, it seems a good time to take a reflective look back and a peak forward in terms of the shelter.

The Unitarian Shelter, now in its 10th year of operation, has seen a great deal of growth in its history. What began as a volunteer driven effort with mats on the floor in response to an urgent community need has grown to a fully staffed facility of 30 beds. Not surprisingly, those 30 beds are consistently full this season, with the weather being cold and the numbers of homeless people growing significantly in our area.

For many years, there was a great deal of uncertainty whether the shelter would be providing services in the upcoming seasons due to commitments from government funders coming in at the eleventh hour, the fellowship pondering other options than a shelter in its basement and the ongoing change of leadership. Year after year, the shelter did end up continuing and carries on with a strong track record in fiscal management and functioning as a service that is respected in the community. However, those times of uncertainty led to a pattern of season-to-season operations where there was no long term vision or planning put into place.

In order to be conscious about our actions and to maximize our efforts in the community, the shelter advisory council has planned a retreat to formulate a 2 year plan for the shelter that will be presented to the FUFON board. We will discuss if any other services are required in tandem with the shelter, such as an outreach service where our guests could receive assistance looking for permanent housing and getting their lives in order. Years ago we did offer an outreach service with great success in housing people and stabilizing the lives of some of our most vulnerable population. Our shelter coordinator and some of our staff have continued to provide this type of service on an ad hoc basis to help people beyond offering a temporary bed. We want to determine if the future of the Unitarian Shelter should, once again, formally include this type of service, or if there is something else we should be working towards.

The question of utilizing the shelter space to its maximum potential continues to be a conundrum that also needs to be addressed. Is it an effective use of existing resources to utilize the space for an annual 5 month period while it sits idle for the remaining part of the year? Could the community be served by utilizing this space during those off season months? If so, then, how?

It is an unfortunate fact that extreme weather shelter services will be required in our community for some time to come, yet the funding that this program relies on is not guaranteed. The Shelter Advisory Committee would like to explore ways that the operation could become more self-sustaining, and not dependent on the whim of the government of the day. It is vital that any endeavor considered be complimentary and beneficial to the spirit of Unitarianism.

It is these questions that we would like to explore during the day long retreat planned for January of 2018. Our advisory committee will be hosted by our inaugural member and friend, Strider Headworth of the World Tree Ministry. We look forward to sharing our vision with the fellowship once we have mapped out a plan.

Ending this calendar year on a high note, our Executive Director, Lois Petersen, has recently reported that the shelter has met half its fundraising goal for the current season to date! That is a great step towards moving towards implementing our goals.

Blessings and thanks go out to all those that continue to support the shelter in so many ways.
Debra Librock, Chair, Shelter Advisory Committee