



The Flaming Chalice

March 2020

Unitarian Fellowship of Sarnia & Port Huron
Lochiel Kiwanis Centre, 180 College Ave. N. Sarnia, Ontario

... an inspiring alternative for spiritual explorers

March Services: Sundays 11 a.m.

March 1st: "The Shocking Secret"
Guest Minister Rev. Rodrigo Emilio Solano-Quesnel

Some recipes invoke a certain degree of orthodoxy, but a home cook affirms that it doesn't have to be that way. And whether making a meal, or bringing together a community of faith, following the recipe that works best for you has its advantages.

March 8th: "Exploring Our Spirituality"
Service Leader Elizabeth Soltis

Every March, we are invited to take part in a membership survey process. Some questions relate to spiritual nourishment, exploration and growth. So, we're curious - what does spiritual nourishment mean to you? How does your soul long to be fed? How would you love to deepen or explore your spirituality further? Come join this uplifting circle conversation to share stories and personal insights.

March 15th: "Celtic Celebration"
An Intergenerational Service with Guest Musicians: Tessa Catton, Christine Storey, Debbie Wellington.

A special gathering to honour Irish and Scottish music, poetry and spirituality as we welcome "Celtic Women" on this Sunday before March 17, Ireland's national holiday and celebration. Be a Celt today!

March 22nd: "The Land called the 5th Gospel"
Guest Speaker Vicars Hodge. Service Leader TBA

Vicars Hodge is an Anglican priest. He will discuss the Holy Land — sacred to Christians, Muslims, and Jews. He will show some of his collection of pictures taken in Israel and the West Bank over the past 30 years and 7 pilgrimages. The discussion will also attempt to address some of the challenges for human rights, peace, and security for the Jewish and Palestinian people.

March 29th: "Returning to Our Foods' Roots"
Guest Speaker Ryan Slyzuk. Service Leader Tim van Bodegom

As a society, we have lost our connection to the food we eat. We don't know the soil it's grown in, the conditions it's grown under, or the people who've sown the seeds. Ryan is the owner of a local organic farm called "Taproots Green Gardens" and his vision is to offer an alternative to the supermarket experience.



"Anybody can create community with people who believe just like they do."

The true test of community rests in the ability to create it with people who disagree with us."

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Your Executive Team met on February 13, 2020



The business of the Fellowship is getting closer to our Annual General Meeting. We discussed the online survey and membership canvass.

The “Sharing our Faith” service was a big success with a total donation to the Canadian Unitarian Council of \$425.00. Thank you for your generosity.

Our Fellowship is asking you to complete a short survey that will help us program the upcoming year.

Fellowship Survey

It is that time of year again when we survey you, our Members and Friends, to learn about your satisfaction with our Fellowship’s activities and to receive your feedback and suggestions. The online survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete.

Please complete the survey by March 16th so your input can be included in our annual results.

Thanks,

Dwayne O’Neill



President's Message:

We live in unprecedented and often terrifying times. We gather together to muster our courage and vision to turn towards the aching world. This is the first lines of a brochure of a retreat I went to in 2013 called *Turning Toward a Breaking World*. A nature based soul experience combined with the practices of earth elder Joanna Macy from her book *Coming Back to Life – Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World*.

When I see the theme broken and whole, I think of this experience. As people we gathered in council, in ceremony and in wild nature, bringing to the center of our consciousness the current devastations in our world. We walked the land in full awareness of the wounds the planet is suffering, endeavoring to listen deeply to the voices of wild nature. We sought the piercing places where our personal wounding met the wounding of the world. We called upon the dream world to show us what is hidden in our collective unconscious and gathered in the morning to share dream images. Together with our ancestors, we walked with questions, tuned our ears to the encouragement and council of future beings, and enacted blessing ceremonies.

This is where the path of brokenness and wholeness met. This is where the despair for the world and the gift of life were mixed together, immersed in holy nature as the container holding it all together. I found myself in great despair while connecting my personal wound with the earth's wound. I was exhilarated with the gift of life, being in my body and being in nature. I was amongst the redwoods of California and I walked along the shimmering pebbles under the water of the meandering Navarro River. We created beauty on the beach of the Pacific Ocean using natural found objects – a mandala for the earth.

Together with gratitude, wholeness and brokenness we were owning and honouring our pain for the world.

In Fellowship—Annette

*“Overcome any bitterness that may have come
because you were not up to the magnitude of the pain
that was entrusted to you.
Like the Mother of the world,
who carries the pain of the world in her heart,
each one of us is part of her heart,
and therefore endowed
with a certain measure of cosmic pain.
You are sharing in the totality of that pain.
You are called upon to meet it in joy
instead of self-pity.*

Sufi saying – unknown

Social Justice Action Team

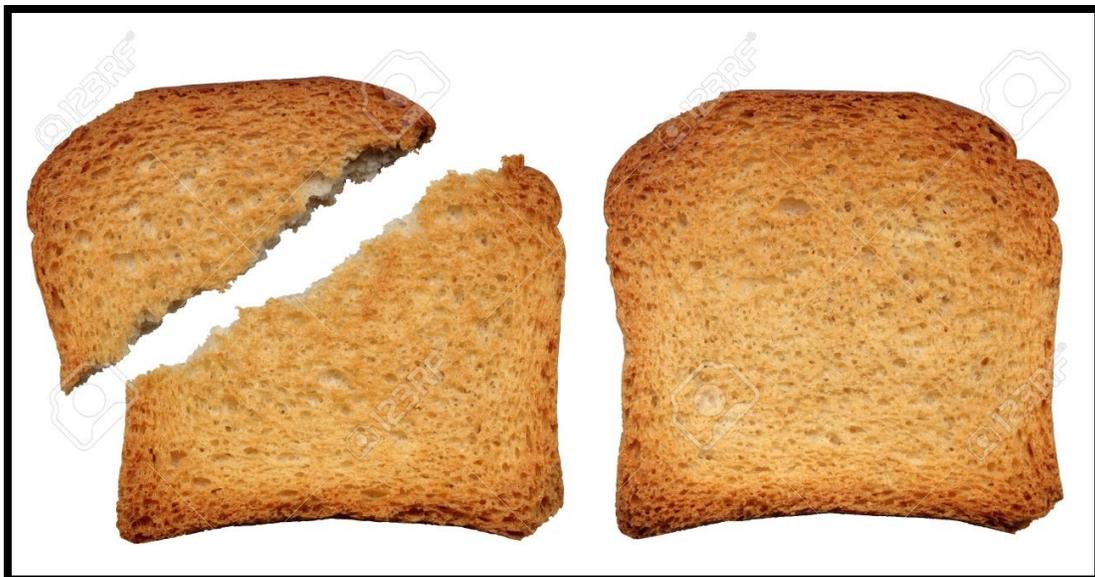


The Teenage Tree Program is still moving along with several volunteers participating in seed planting at the nursery and taking care of the trees that have sprouted already. We are on track to have our target of more than 5,000 saplings available for sale this year.

The design of a website and sales/inventory system for the Teenage Tree Program has started and we are planning to have it rolled out by April. The platform will be a key vehicle in educating people about the Teenage Tree Program, the importance of native trees and how they can become involved.

Please contact either Elizabeth Soltis, Annette Verhagen or Dwayne O'Neill for further information and to inquire how to be involved.

BROKEN/WHOLE:



THEOLOGICAL DIVERSITY POOL Calgary ACM 2013

Classical Theism: “A personal relationship with God is a vital part of my spiritual life and a necessary part of my worship experience.”
Belief in a creator God who is the sole creator and ruler of the universe and everything that exists. It is a system of thought that assumes the existence of one unified and perfect being who, although distinguished from the cosmos (unlike pantheism), is its source and the power which continues to be active in it, sustaining and providentially guiding it (unlike deism.)

Agnostic Theism – The view of those who do not claim to *know* existence of any deity, but still *believe* in such an existence.

Polytheism: “I believe that there are many beings who are gods.”

A type of theism, polytheism is the worship or belief in multiple deities usually assembled into a pantheon of gods and goddesses, along with their own religions and rituals. It contrasts with monotheism, the belief in a singular God. Polytheists do not always worship all Gods equally.

Deism: “I believe that there is a god, but one with whom we cannot have a personal relationship.”

A philosophy that regards God as the intelligent creator of an independent and law-abiding world, but denies that God guides it or intervenes in any way with its course or destiny. Reason is the sole instrument through which God’s existence and nature can be deduced from the orderly workings of the universe. The creator God of the Deist, like a divine clock maker, assembles or shapes the universe and then leaves it to run on its own.

Atheism: “I deny the existence of a god of any kind”

A belief that there is no god or gods.

Agnosticism: “I am undecided about whether God exists or no.”

Agnostic comes from the Greek: *α- a-*, without *gnōsis*, knowledge (also found in the word ‘gnosticism’), and is the belief that “the nature and existence of gods is unknown and cannot be known or proven.”

Humanism: “I believe that human beings are responsible for ‘goodness’ and ‘meaning,’ and that we must rely on one another for support.”

Humanism is a group of philosophies and ethical perspectives which emphasize the value and agency of human beings, individually and collectively, and generally prefers individual thought and evidence (rationalism, empiricism) over established doctrine or faith.

Mysticism: “I find support and value in the fullness and the connectedness of all things, with or without God.”

The pursuit of communion with, identity with, or conscious awareness of an ultimate reality, divinity, spiritual truth, or God through direct experience, intuition, instinct or insight. Practices associated with mysticism include meditation and contemplative prayer. Mysticism can be distinguished from ordinary religious belief by its emphasis on the direct personal experience of unique states of consciousness, particularly those of a transcendently blissful character.

Religious Naturalism: Religious Naturalism asserts that the natural world is the centre of our most significant experiences and understandings. It is an approach to spirituality that is devoid of supernaturalism, and focuses on the religious attributes of the universe/nature, the understanding of it, and our response to it (interpretive, spiritual and moral).

Religious naturalism is philosophically materialistic but affirms the sense of mystery that accompanies our contemplation of the emergence of matter (and especially of life) from the Big Bang forward.

Earth-Centred Spirituality: “My spiritual life is lived in response to the sacred circle of being and the effort to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.”

A spirituality at whose core is a sense that the Sacred manifests throughout the natural world, that we can experience it directly through communion with Nature, and that the Spirit of the Earth unites all beings in a vast and varied web of interdependent connections. The pagan traditions incorporate attitudes of veneration and respect for the Earth, and shape a way of life that reflects the patterns and wisdom found in Nature, inspiring us to honor diversity, to value tribal, cooperative community, and to live in harmonious balance as an integral part of the natural world.

(Neo-)Paganism: “I am inspired by the interconnection of all life, natural and divine, and find inspiration by participating in the traditions of indigenous peoples.”

This is an umbrella term referring to a diversity of contemporary religious movements, particularly those influenced by or claiming to be derived from the various historical pagan beliefs of pre-modern Europe. Polytheism, animism, and pantheism are common features in Pagan theology. Of the various days for celebration among Pagans, the most common are seasonally based festivals of the Wheel of the Year.

Feminist Spirituality/Theology: “I join with others in reclaiming the Divine Feminine through honouring the sacredness of the earth.”

The study of, or knowledge of, the Goddess, as opposed to theology which is the study of or knowledge of God. Within faith traditions, feminist spirituality uses a feminist lens to explore and expose attitudes, beliefs, and practices which promote gender role stereotypes. For example, feminist theologians have supported the use of non- or multi-gendered language for God, arguing that language powerfully impacts belief about the behaviour and essence of God.

Pantheism: “I equate God with the forces and laws of the universe.”

The doctrine that all things and beings are modes, attributes or appearances of one single, unified reality or being. Hence nature and God are believed to be identical. Pantheism is not theism – the acceptance of a single, personal god, but it is not atheism either, a disbelief in a sacred or numinous universe. The pantheist walks, literally, every day in the Mind and Body of God.

Panentheism: “I believe that the universe is an interrelated whole that deserves human reverence.”

A view which combines the insights of pantheism and deism by arguing that the world is included in God’s being, or by using the analogy of cells in a larger organism. It sets itself apart from pantheism in that it does not maintain that God & the world are identical. The power of the parts is something suffered by the whole, not enacted by it.

Naturalistic theism: “I believe that the powers traditionally attributed to a supernatural deity are inherent in the natural world, which is the focus of my respect and devotion.”

Naturalistic Theism offers a reverent orientation towards the natural world (which includes humans and human culture) that is in harmony with reason and our unfolding understanding of the universe as informed by the sciences.

Regular Events:

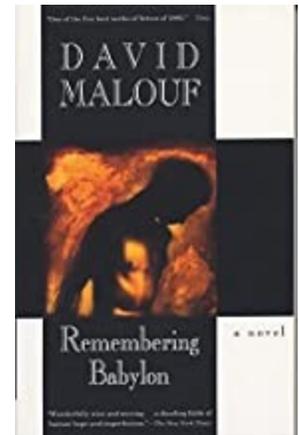
Book Club: Continues to meet on the 3rd Sunday of every month at 9:15 am at John's Restaurant on London Line. The book for March is **Remembering Babylon** by **David Malouf**. All are welcome whether or not you've read the book.

Men's Group: Details will be announced as they become available.

Women's Group: Details will be provided as they become available.

Small Group Ministry: Members meet every other Thursday afternoon at chosen locations. All are welcome. Contact Betty Learn for info at: 519-337-4039

Journey Groups: Evening Group last Monday of each month 7 pm. Afternoon Group last Wednesday of each month at 12:45 pm. Contact Ann Steadman at 519-542-9708 for info.



Invitation



Allan & Dorothy invite you to their annual "St Paddy's Day" Circle Dinner on Tuesday, March 17th (St. Patrick's Day) at 6:00 pm at their home at 1446 Sylvan Court. Please bring your "Celtic Spirit" and a dish to share.

Sharing our Faith Service

Thank you to all who attended our annual "Sharing Our Faith" service on February 9th. Your generous donations totaled \$425 which will be sent to the Canadian Unitarian Council's SOF fund to allow congregations to apply for grants that help them "grow" in their communities.

"SHARING" works for everyone!



For Inspiration:

Wholeness is not achieved by cutting off a portion of one's being, but by integration of the contraries

- Carl Gustav Jung

To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable.

- C S Lewis

Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in.

-- Leonard Coen



We Are Whole
By Beth Lefever

We are whole, even in the broken places, even where it hurts.

We are whole, even in the broken places, the places where fear impedes our full engagement with life; where self-doubt corrupts our self-love; where shame makes our faces hot and our souls cold. We are whole, even in those places where perfectionism blunts the joy of full immersion into person, place, activity; where "good enough" does not reside except in our silent longings; where our gaps must be fast-filled with substance, accomplishment, or frenzied activity lest they gape open and disgust.

We are whole where we would doubt our own goodness, richness, fullness and depth, where we would doubt our own significance, our own profoundness.

We are whole, even in our fragility; even where we feel fragmented, alone, insubstantial, insufficient.

We are whole, even as we are in process, even as we stumble, even as we pick ourselves up again, for we are whole. We are whole.





“Because of the role that religion has historically played in denying gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people their full humanity, I believe that we now have a special calling to reach out to our GLBT sisters and brothers. We need to offer an explicit welcome, because the world can still be a very unwelcoming place. We need to offer radical acceptance, because neither family nor society can always be counted on to be accepting. We need to offer unconditional love, because Love is at the heart of religious community.”

— Allison Barrett, Canadian UU Minister

For the latest **CUC eNews** & past issues click on this link:

<http://cuc.ca/cuc-eneews/>

For the Unitarian Universalist Associations latest **UUWorld** click on this link:

<http://www.uuworld.org/>

Pease consider sharing this newsletter with a friend and invite them to a service.

Every Sunday is “Bring a Guest” Sunday!

Each issue of the “Flaming Chalice” newsletter is printed by the Organization for Literacy Lambton (OLL): helping every person acquire the gift of literacy.

Newsletter Editor: Wendy Cornelis

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