



The Flaming Chalice

January 2024

Unitarian Fellowship of Sarnia & Port Huron

Lochiel Kiwanis Centre, 180 College Ave. N. Sarnia, Ontario uusarnia.com

A loving community of spiritual explorers who stand on the side of love and justice

January Services

In-person & via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83460043365>



Theme—Mystery

The Cosmos is all that is or was or ever will be. Our feeblest contemplations of the Cosmos stir us -- there is a tingling in the spine, a catch in the voice, a faint sensation, as if a distant memory, of falling from a height. We know we are approaching the greatest of mysteries.

Carl Sagan

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January 7: Melissa Dent - "Demonstrating Artificial Intelligence"

In her talk, Melissa will aim to demystify Artificial Intelligence (AI) offering insights into its essential principles and showcasing demonstrations to illustrate its practical applications.

January 14: Rev. Karen Fraser Gitlitz - "To be or not to be Chat GPT"

How is AI shaping our understanding of what it means to be human? More info on page 2.

January 21: Allan McKeown - "The Gift of Lay-Chaplaincy"

Allan served the Fellowship as a lay chaplain from 2002-2016 and officiated at many weddings, memorial services, and other rites of passage. He will share how serving as a lay chaplain was one of the most wonderful and meaningful times in his life.

January 28: Mary Abma – "Winter Wild Church"

"Winter is the oldest season; it has some quality of the absolute. Yet beneath the surface of winter, the miracle of spring is already in preparation" (John O'Donohue, *To Bless the Space Between Us*). You are invited to join Mary Abma for a winter Wild Church experience on January 28, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. at the property of David D. Plain. We will meet in his teaching lodge, where a sacred fire will be tended. Please bring suitable clothing for a winter wander, water, and a journal. Hot water, tea and hot chocolate will be provided. Chairs are provided. More info and maps on page 3.

Further Service Info for January 14th



Description: In what ways is artificial intelligence pushing us to deepen our ethical and theological muscles? The advent of AI chatbots has opened a whole new area of ethics as we figure out when and whether it is ok to use artificial intelligence. Underneath these ethical questions are statements of belief and values about what it means to be human and our place in the world.

Speaker bio: Karen Fraser Gitlitz is Saskatoon Unitarians' parish minister and a professional Art Therapist. For the past three summers, she has been a participant and a core walker with the Water Walk for the North and South Saskatchewan River, following Indigenous leadership by walking the river in Ceremony for the healing of the water. In all of these activities – ministry, art therapy, and water walking – she is drawn to the healing that comes when we are able to connect to ourselves, our communities, and the land.

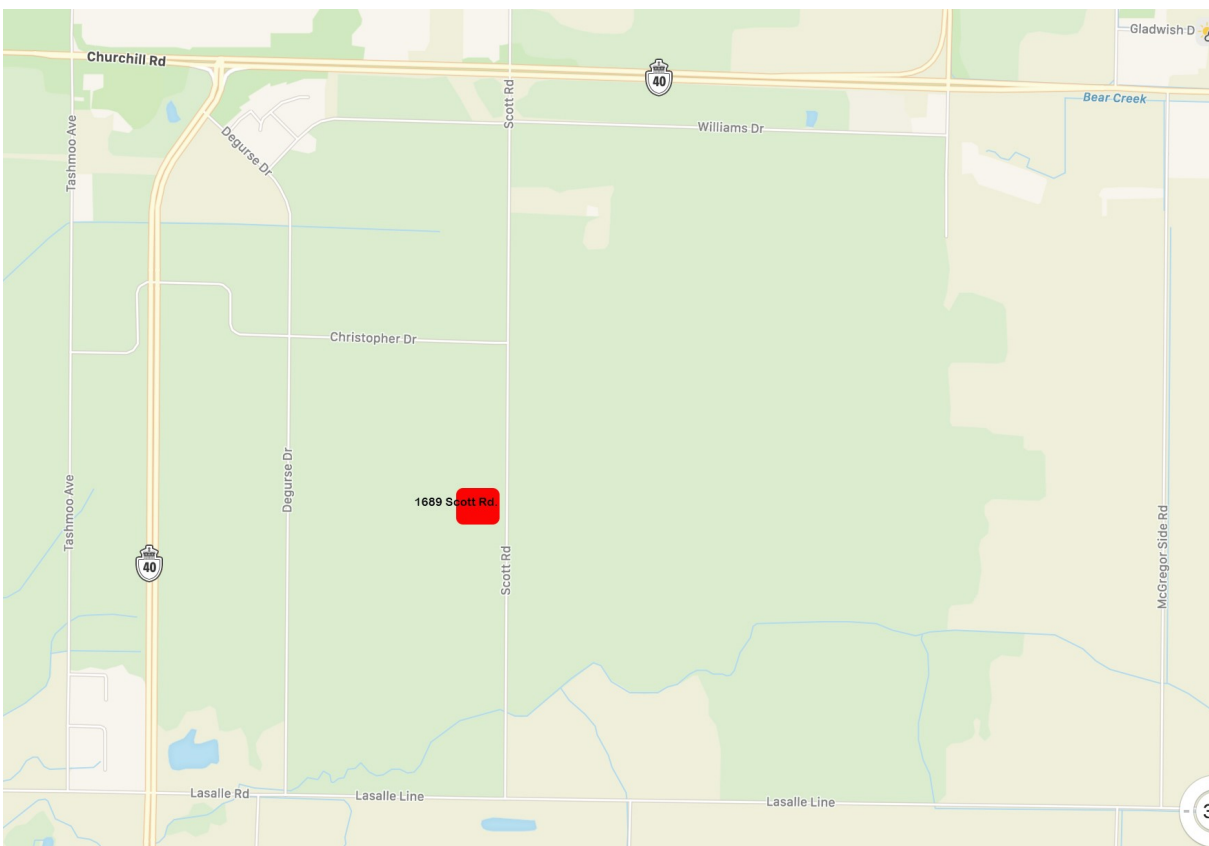
The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existence. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery each day.

Albert Einstein

Further Service Info for January 28th @ David Plain's

Location: 1689 Scott Rd., Sarnia (Between Highway 40 and LaSalle).

Instructions: From Highway 40, it is the second driveway past Christopher Street. The first driveway takes you to David's house. The second driveway has parking along it and has a small parking lot on the left-hand side. Please reserve spots at the boardwalk for those who have mobility issues. ***A collection will be taken for the fire keeper.***



President Mark's Musings for January

The UFSPH Executive Team met for the fourth meeting of 2023/24 on December 14th. The opening words for our meeting were #434 from *Singing the Living Tradition* that included:

May we know once again that we are not isolated beings but connected, in mystery and miracle, to the universe, to this community and to each other.

Vice President, Program Chair, Newsletter Editor Ann Steadman pointed out that these words were in harmony with the theme for January.

On page 4 of the theme package (see link below) from the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto, there is an exercise (adapted from Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat) that challenges us to “Consciously Dwell in Mystery”. I enjoyed the following comment::

To practice mystery means cherishing the baffling, curious, hidden, and inscrutable dimensions of your existence and the world around you. Live with paradoxes. Give up the idea that you can always "get it."

As a chemist working in the valley, I understood it was my job to always “get it”. Knowing that the quality control numbers were factual, knowing that the recipe of the day wouldn't lump a reactor, were the day-to-day realities of my job for many years.

Our Fellowship has presented me with the opportunity for a different perspective. It is a community in which we can acknowledge that we don't always “get it”. Many of us put a tentative toe in the UFSPH water bowl because we didn't accept the rote answers given by main stream religion and we were searching to explore the impossible to understand or interpret (aka inscrutable) paradoxes of the real world.

It brings me joy to be part of the UFSPH community of Members and Friends that celebrates the mystery and miracle of life.

In Fellowship, Mark Woolston



'Mystery' theme package from the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto:

<https://www.firstunitariantoronto.org/wp-content/publications/tj/2023/The-Journey-2023-12-Mystery.pdf>

Quotes on 'Mystery' To Ponder

Love is an endless mystery because there is no reasonable cause that could explain it.

Rabindranath Tagore

The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible.

Oscar Wilde

The beauty and mystery of this world only emerges through affection, attention, interest, and compassion . . . open your eyes wide and actually see this world by attending to its colors, details and irony.

Orhan Pamuk

Science cannot solve the ultimate mystery of nature. And that is because, in the last analysis, we ourselves are a part of the mystery that we are trying to solve.

Max Planck

I realized it for the first time in my life: there is nothing but mystery in the world, how it hides behind the fabric of our poor, browbeat days, shining brightly, and we don't even know it.

Sue Monk Kidd

Faith minus vulnerability and mystery equals extremism. If you've got all the answers, then don't call what you do faith.

Brene Brown

The ultimate mystery is one's own self.

Sammy Davis, Jr.

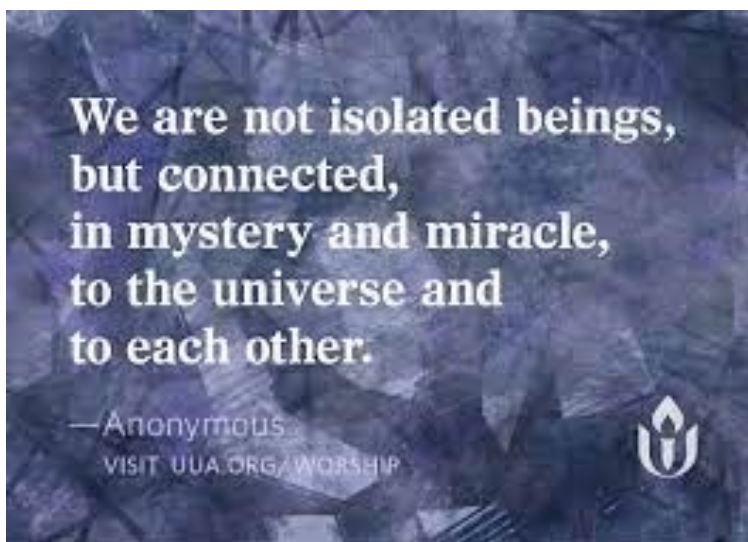
The job of the artist is always to deepen the mystery.

Francis Bacon

I do not at all understand the mystery of grace - only that it meets us where we are but does not leave us where it found us.

Anne Lamott

The possession of knowledge does not kill the sense of wonder and mystery. There is always more mystery. **Anais Nin**



We have to stop and be humble enough to understand that there is something called mystery. **Paulo Coelho**

Mystery is at the heart of creativity. That, and surprise.

Julia Cameron

Each person is an enigma. You're a puzzle not only to yourself but also to everyone else, and the great mystery of our time is how we penetrate this puzzle.

Theodore Zeldin

I would rather live in a world where my life is surrounded by mystery than live in a world so small that my mind could comprehend it.

Harry Emerson Fosdick

Those who dwell among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life.

Rachel Carson

Mid-Winter Retreat 2024

**February 2-4, 2024 (from 5:00 pm Friday until after lunch on Sunday)
YMCA Cedar Glen Outdoor Centre
13300 Concession 11
Schomberg, ON L0G 1T0**

The Mid-Winter retreat is an annual in-person event organized by UUs in the Greater Toronto Area and is open to all UUs.

Helen Iacovino, Registrar for the Midwinter Retreat Committee is delighted to announce that Rev. Linda Thomson will be the keynote speaker at the 2024 Midwinter Retreat.

The theme of the retreat is “Becoming Reacquainted,” and the topic of the keynote will be “For Such a Time as This.” Together, participants will consider all that has been challenged in recent years, and ask questions about how to rebuild and strengthen UU communities. Linda is the Congregational Life Lead for the Central and Eastern Regions at the Canadian Unitarian Council.

Registration is open; please visit the [event website](#) and [Facebook page](#), which are being updated as the plans for 2024 develop.

Early Bird registration will be open until December 29, and the registration deadline (for all registrations) is January 12.



Dick Felton Named to Mayor's 2023 Honour List!



“The list is a tribute to the unsung people and groups in the community who make a difference in trying to create a good and just community and society,” Bradley said. “It is living proof that individual citizens and groups can make a difference.” Bradley noted that the “highly personal list” is based on his observations through the year as well as nominations from the public and media stories.

Dick Felton is a member and former president of the Kiwanis Club of Sarnia-Lambton Golden K who, in 2020, volunteered to take on the job of executive director of Sarnia’s Lochiel Kiwanis Community Centre, home to mostly non-profit organizations working with children and youth. The centre is at full capacity and there have been numerous upgrades to the former elementary school building. *Observer, January 3, 2023*

UUA and CUC Explained

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) is the central organization for the Unitarian Universalist (UU) religious movement in the United States. Our faith is **diverse and inclusive** and the UUA’s 1000+ member congregations are committed to principles and values that hold closely the worth and dignity of each person as sacred, the need for justice and compassion, the right of conscience, and respect for the interdependent nature of all existence.



The Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) is the national organization for Canadian Unitarians, Unitarian Universalists, and Universalist Unitarians (UUs) in Canada. The CUC is made up of member congregations to which it is accountable. It is a voice for our vibrant, liberal faith community, within the interfaith community in Canada, and within the international UU community.

Our bi-national Fellowship pays membership dues annually to the CUC while also maintaining a connection with the UUA by means of a modest annual contribution.

Instead of a creed, Unitarian Universalists share a spirit and vision of radical inclusivity, individual agency and social justice. We create a safe space to stand out, stand up, and change your mind particularly during life transitions. We embrace personal discovery and growth through learning, engagement, and service. Our only doctrine is love.

VICTORIA MITCHELL



Vision

*As a spiritual community,
We embrace diversity,
We explore openly,
We stand on the side of love and justice.
Community ... Spirituality ... Service*



Other UU links:

Canadian Unitarian Council <https://cuc.ca/>

Unitarian Universalist Associations latest **UUWorld** <http://www.uuworld.org/>

Newsletter Editor: Ann Steadman

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asteadman@cogeco.ca