



# LUF Newsletter

Lakehead Unitarian Fellowship

**JANUARY 2012**

“An inclusive spiritual community promoting a compassionate, just, and sustainable world.”

**SUNDAY SERVICE at 10:30 am at 129 S. Algoma St.**  
**Children’s Religious Exploration Classes (Child Care Provided)**



## LUF’S CHRISTMAS SERVICE

An abundance of lively energy was experienced by all as the ‘Shower Singers’ led by Rob Van Wyck sprayed droplets of Holiday Cheer with their exuberant voices on December 18th. How fortunate we are to have such talent. Even more delightful were the joyous voices of our very own Children’s Choir led by Dianne Potts. Much gratitude goes out to all those who endeavour to touch our hearts with such special activities. Thank you Katie, Dianne, Rob and the choir. Of course not to be forgotten are the children who attended and were entertained and provided with special gifts from Rev. Suzanne Wasilczuk.

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### UPCOMING SERVICES

Jan. 8	<b>Title:</b>	"Epiphanies in Our Lives: Our Journeys to 'What?!"
	<b>Speaker:</b>	Rev. Suzanne Wasilczuk
	<b>Leader:</b>	David Belrose
Jan. 15	<b>Title:</b>	TBA
	<b>Speaker:</b>	Medhat Rahim
	<b>Leader:</b>	Susan Tiura
Jan. 22	<b>Title:</b>	“How Learning an Aboriginal language can change your life”
	<b>Speaker:</b>	Sita Holland
	<b>Leader:</b>	Margaret Wanlin
Jan. 29	<b>Title:</b>	"Growing into Spring; Springing into Growth"
	<b>Speaker:</b>	Rev. Suzanne Wasilczuk

## From the President

LUF 2011 was a good year in many ways, not so good in others. We lost some valued members, some passed away, some passed on, some passed by.

We gained new members as well, and with that came new ideas and initiatives.

RE and Adult RE were reinvigorated. Sunday Services with “enhanced ministry” and the blend of local talent with professional leadership, always accompanied by excellent live music has been successful. Sunday services have reflected the rainbow of spiritualism, humanism, christianity, buddhism, paganism etc. We are witnessing a gradual shift from our humanist roots towards more interest in spiritualism, while maintaining our strong humanitarian connection with society.

The search for part-time ministry is progressing well. The interim focus team has evolved into an active search committee which will first seek consensus with the congregation on the recruitment process. Funds budgeted for the actual search and borrowed from the “Futures Fund” were not accessed in 2011, and are now planned to be used in 2012.

The building has served us well for another year. Even though not handicapped accessible, some aids were installed. Expansion to the north or to the south was either not available or deemed unwise. We will continue to watch for opportunities for alternative housing, while being aware of “capital funding” requirements so as not to deplete operating funds.

There is an interesting development in the fellowship funding process. Pledging appears to be on the decline, while non-pledged giving appears to be increasing. Even though all funding is appreciated, commitments towards personnel, programs and larger maintenance projects are more difficult to budget and plan.

Wishing all members enrichment in their favourite quests for 2012.

Bert Blaauw,

LUF President

## From the Treasurer

The provisional 2012 Budget has been completed and examined by the Board. You can get a copy of it at the LUF office or on the table near the front door. Your comments, suggestions and questions are welcome but please submit any of these before January 8, 2012. The congregational Budget Ratification meeting is Jan 15th, right after the morning service. Get your suggestions in before the deadline please because **suggestions for alterations to the Budget cannot be entertained at the meeting itself.**

In 2011 we had a total of 65 pledging units for a total of \$57000. At this point (Dec 20) in the 2012 Campaign, we have 36 pledge cards returned for a total of \$36300. If you are still intending to return your pledge which we hope you do, please try to get it into the LUF office as soon as you can. Leaving it on the collection plate is another possibility. We are anticipation great things at LUF in the New Year.

Thanks to everyone for all their support.

Rob Van Wyck,

## LUF AS A WELCOMING CONGREGATION

During October and November, 2011, a number of members and friends of LUF gathered on Tuesday evenings to work through a series of eight Welcoming Congregation workshops. There was a great deal of sharing and exploration of LGBT issues, looking at common elements of oppression, gender socialization and homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, religion and homosexuality, bisexuality and transgender identity. Many of the participants found it very rewarding, and all agreed that LUF should move to renew its status as a Welcoming Congregation.

The LUF Board has voted to endorse the idea of renewal of our Welcoming Congregation status. It is planned to hold a Sunday service on February 5 that will highlight the value of the program through personal stories. We are looking to the renewal of our status and moving on to consider how to go about "Living the Welcoming Congregation".

Submitted by David Belrose

## TEN WAYS TO BECOME A MORE WELCOMING CONGREGATION

(from Interweave Connect, October 2011 - see also <http://www.uua.org/lgbt>)

When people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, &/or transgender (LGBT) first come to your congregation, they may be uneasy until they know they are welcome. Many LGBT people will assume that you and your congregation don't want them unless you clearly invite them in. Members of oppressed groups need to know that the congregation is aware of their issues, and that they are welcome as their full selves. Little things are often the most important. What will really make people feel welcome, and what will make them want to return, is inclusion in all aspects of church life. You can make it clear that they are welcome without their having to ask.

1. Engage with the "Welcoming Congregation" Program: Go through the Welcoming Congregation Program. If your congregation is already recognized as a Welcoming Congregation, do a refresher course if you were recognized more than five years ago, and/or consider engaging with "Living the Welcoming Congregation."
2. Proclaim your welcome: Advertise in local and regional LGBT publications and newsletters, including online ones. Place a note in all of your Orders of Service that states your welcome.
3. Make information about LGBT people and issues available: In your literature area, on your bulletin boards, and/or on your website, include literature about LGBT people and issues and what LGBT outreach and public witness your congregation is doing.
4. Take steps toward inclusive language: Provide written guidelines for inclusive language to all people who write for church newsletter and web-site, participate in worship services, lead religious education programs, and who serve as greeters.
5. Acknowledge and respect individuals and families: Accord full acknowledgment and respect to each person and family, as defined by the person/family. This includes the definition of pledging units, listings in the church directory, family events, and all other aspects of church life.
6. Avoid assumptions: Avoid making assumptions about the sexual orientation or gender identity of members or visitors; respect each person's identity, self-labels, and pronoun preferences.
7. Take special steps toward transgender welcome: Do education around understanding the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity, and take special steps toward transgender well-come and inclusion.
8. Make LGBT issues a part of worship.
9. Do outreach and public witness around LGBT issues.
10. Extend your welcome beyond sexual orientation and gender identity: Emphasize the interrelatedness of all forms of oppression and weave this into everything that the congregation does.

## 2012 NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS and INNOVATION Del Dickey

We all know the speed of change in communication strategies where innovation has moved so quickly to the iPhone and the iPad. The companies responsible for these great new products are generally North American. There is innovation in the rest of the world too. Many of those technologies could be useful in Canada.

In this past year we have had two speakers, Kate Green of USC Canada who told us about USC-led developments in Nepal, and Mike Nickerson who spoke about the message in his book "Life Money and Illusion". Kate will speak at LUF about third world innovation when she visits Thunder Bay in February 2012 to participate in "Seedy Saturday" and a public meeting planned for Friday February 24.

USC Canada has adopted "Innovation" as its vision and message for 2012 and Kate is excited about bringing these ideas to Thunder Bay. You can keep up to date with USC's work in biodiversity, seed saving, food security and food sovereignty in Canada by getting on the electronic mailing list for the monthly e-newsletter "Cyber Sprout" at [info@usc-canada.org](mailto:info@usc-canada.org)

Mike Nickerson has spent 40 years studying cultural evolution. Check the web address [www.SustainWellBeing.net](http://www.SustainWellBeing.net). This will lead to a variety of links. Check [www.sustainwellbeing.net/speaking\\_of\\_transformation.html](http://www.sustainwellbeing.net/speaking_of_transformation.html) you will find a summary of the four key messages for "Living on Earth as if we want to stay" - the message that he brought us in September.

Make a 2012 resolution to stay current with the work of these two organizations and realize that many people are working hard to help sustain our planet, but we only hear what the media wants to present to us.

### UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

**Saturday January 28th** - Service Leader's Practical Workshop - 9:30 AM - 12 noon This is an opportunity to get your hands on the microphone, figure out the lighter, test your voice and get comfortable with the nuts and bolts leading services. Refreshments provided.

#### **Saturday Feb 11th - double-feature**

morning workshop on creating a caring community

afternoon workshop - "deep listening"- an introduction to how to be a supportive contact with someone going through a difficult time

You can attend either or both sessions on that day. Details will be provided shortly.

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR JANUARY 2012

Every Sunday at 9:00am, Non-Violent Communication-LUF Basement Kitchen	Every Wed. at 5:30pm Yoga with Sarah, \$6- LUF Hall	Mon., Jan. 9, 1 pm Finance Mtg. -LUF Kitchen	<u>Wed, Jan. 16 7:30pm Fellowship Life/Membership Mtg.</u> - LUF Boardroom
Every Sunday at 10:30am, Sunday Service at LUF	Every Wednesday at 7:30pm Mindfulness Practice	Mon., Jan. 9, 7pm LUF Board Mtg. - LUF hall	Sat., Jan. 28, Service Leaders Workshop 9:30am- LUF Hall
Every Sunday at 7:30pm, Meditation	Every Thursday at 4:00pm Tai Chi LUF Hall	Mon, Jan. 9, 23, 7:30pm Men's Group - LUF Kitchen	Sat., Jan. 14, 28, Bridge, 1pm - LUF Hall
Every Tuesday morning, Cleaning of the Church	Sun., Jan. 8, 9:15am, RE meeting - LUF Boardroom	Tues., Jan.10, 5pm Sun. Service Mtg - LUF Kit	Sat., Jan. 21, 8pm - Milonga Night - LUF Hall
Every Tuesday at 6:30, ARE Workshop, The Prophetic Imperative - LUF Hall (Beginning Jan. 17.)	Sun., Jan. 15, 12:00pm, Congregational Budget Ratification Meeting - LUF Hall.	Tues., Jan. 10, 7pm Nu-Moon Meeting - LUF hall	
		Wed., Jan. 4, 7pm Evening Chalice Circle - Offsite	

We have had a busy month with the Religious Education Program here at Lakehead Unitarian Fellowship. We are very pleased to see a dramatic attendance increase in our Sunday participants! So much, that more chairs will need to be purchased and possibly another table! Thank you to everyone for their participation!

I have been so overwhelmed by the support the friends and members of LUF have given in helping in the Primary class. It seems that each Sunday, the helper sign-up sheet has been filled in- occasionally with more than one name! Thank you so much to all the adults who lend an extra hand in the Primary class, you are all very much appreciated!

Saturday, Dec 10<sup>th</sup> the LUF hall was filled with 45 adults and children participating in our Religious Education Christmas Craft and Pizza Party! Everyone enjoyed seasonal crafts and delicious pizza. I would like to thank all of the organizers and helpers who made this great day possible; Debbie Saffronyk, Brenda Gillespie, Shona Beattie, Rosemary Burris, Lisa Machionne, Ed and Willemien Prinselaar, Meaghan and Siobhan Malashewski, Meghan Jewel, Bob Morgan, Matthew Hornblower and Mark Blauuw. Thank you to all who attended and helped organize.

On Sunday Dec 18<sup>th</sup>, the Children's Choir put all their hard work to test by performing our beautiful song selection in the Christmas Service with Rev. Suzanne Wasilczuk. Thank you so much to our dedicated choir director Dianne Potts. She worked tirelessly to prepare us for this event. She also wrote the wonderful song "I am a Shining Star" that we performed. Thank you Dianne for sharing your talents with us!

I look forward to seeing everyone again when Religious Education Classes begin again on Sunday January 8<sup>th</sup> 2012!

The pictures speak to the fun that was had by kids and adults alike!!

Katie Hughdie (Director of Religious Education)



The Ministerial Search Team (Rosemary Burris, Ed Prinselaar, Christine Meronyk, Margaret Wanlin) has almost completed its task. The Team will present the final version of the Congregational Record to the Board at the January Board meeting. This Record is a UUA-developed on-line match-making system for congregations and ministers – now doesn't that sound like fun! Once approved by the Board, the Congregational Record will be sent to Antonia Won, our Western District CUC consultant who will post our Record on-line so that the information is available to all ministers who might be "looking".

In January the "torch" will be passed. Susan Tiura and Margaret Wanlin have agreed to co-chair the process to recruit and select a part-time minister. More information will follow throughout the year.

## **What might our Missional Objective be for 2012?**

Do you remember the congregational assessment we did in 2009? It provided a review of congregational health as seen by people who individually completed questionnaires. The survey had a great response with 64 surveys completed.

You may recall that the survey was broken into two categories: Relational Characteristics and Functional Characteristics with the first category about our purpose and how we go about achieving it and the second category about the technical aspects of how it all works. One category where we gave ourselves a mediocre score – 5 out of 10 – was on the topic of a "Specific, Concrete Missional Objective". This quotation captured a sentiment voiced by several:

*Empty Bowls – Caring Hearts, Shelter House, gay rights, war resisters, Grandmothers for Africa, Seedy Saturday ... in the "community grapevine", LUF the organization, is a rather modest influence, but individuals from LUF are seen and respected in the wider community ... and that they belong to LUF is more on the margin. People come to LUF to fill their wells."*

At an enthusiastic pair of workshops in May led by Rev. Frances Deverell in May, 2011 it was apparent that the people of LUF are ready to collaborate on a social action/social justice front – in addition to the many things that people are already involved in individually.

Frances provided us with information about two processes for how congregations make decisions about what type of initiative to support. The Rankin process is used at First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto. The Healing our World process is used by the First Unitarian Church of Victoria. The advice is to select projects that are specific and measurable so that the congregation can see and feel good about its contribution. (If anyone would like to receive the details for these two approaches I can email them to you – email me at [mwanlin@tbaytel.net](mailto:mwanlin@tbaytel.net))

A group met to develop an approach customized for LUF (from the Board Marsha Reinikka, Fed Upshaw, Margaret Wanlin, chair of the Social Responsibility Committee Ahti Tolvanen). They prepared a draft which was approved by the Board for implementation in 2012. Here it is:

### ***A Process for Social Action Discernment and Consensus Building at LUF - Steps***

Brainstorming – involving the whole church through posters, newsletter articles and after church gathering

A small committee sorts and prioritizes the list, with an emphasis on doing something specific and measurable

Each short-listed group/idea is asked to prepare a one-page outline of the idea to communicate it to the congregation

A voting session will be held and people will vote in two ways:

Voting with dots to say "I would like to see LUF involved in this work."

Signing up to say "I am prepared to contribute time, talent and/or treasure to this work."

Based on the input received the small committee reconvenes to select the one or two projects that seem best suited to the congregation at this time.

Projects run for a year, results are reported to the congregation. - **Notes:** This initiative does not involve donating money from the congregation's pledged funds. It is acknowledged that many people are already involved in many things and that will continue. The idea here is to have a shared piece of missional work which has congregational backing – or at least consent. Presumably this would be an annual process; we could decide to carry on with a project for subsequent years. Discussion of the 2012 plans will begin in January.

Margaret Wanlin

## A Minister's Eye View

In my November newsletter article I called the Lakehead Unitarian Fellowship (LUF) a religious community of faith and vision and missionary zeal. Let's parse that out.

Lakehead Unitarian Fellowship is a religious (from the Latin, *religare*) community – a community tied together, and re-examining those connections with grace and fervor.

And we do have faith – in ourselves, in each other, in the Earth, in the Krebs's cycle or in math or physics, in God. Pick one, or pick several – faith, like the powder milk biscuits of Prairie Home Companion fame, allows us to carry on & do what needs to be done. And we have vision.

**“Lakehead Unitarian Fellowship is an inclusive spiritual community promoting a compassionate, just, and sustainable world.”**

That statement is from the LUF newsletter. LUF envisions embracing folks with many different spiritual paths. LUF expects that those paths will feed its members, and strengthen them to go out into the world and work for Love & Justice & a Harmonious Social Order & Balanced Ecosystems. We aspire to greatness. We see the world as an Interdependent Web, as a Holy Whole.

And we aspire to missionary zeal. Yes, I expect us to go out into the world and proclaim the wondrous healing power of our faith, our good news:

That we are one world, connected in myriad ways, each of which may take a lifetime to explore.

That all are welcomed at the Table of Life. Or, in other language, that we are all Children of God.

That humans are the vehicles for positive change in this world, the Vessels of Love and Justice. Or, if you prefer, that we humans are the eyes & ears & hands of God on this earth.

That this earth is a precious gift, worthy of our care, our reverence, our protection, our sacrifice.

That is our Unitarian *Good News*. That is our saving message of hope: You matter. What you do matters.  
In faith, hope & love, **Rev. Suzanne**

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Evelyn Underhill (a Catholic religious and spiritual writer) saw worship as: "The absolute acknowledgment of all that lies beyond us – the glory that fills heaven and earth. It is the response that conscious beings make to their Creator to the Eternal Reality from which they came forth; to God, however they may think of Him or recognize Him, and whether He be realized through religion, through nature, through history, through science, art, or human life and character." Although her use of the God-word is similarly problematic, her definition encompasses both a personified deity and a more cosmic concept of cause.

Worship is often used interchangeably with adoration and veneration. Adoration often refers to worship and homage that is rightly offered to God alone. Veneration, is honour paid to the a person, who is a created being. The two concepts are not seen as being in competition with each other. On the other hand, some Jewish and Sunni Moslem groups and most Protestant sects, have strong prohibitions against veneration of saints or angels . They very much regard these are idolatry, that is rendering honour to false gods . Somewhere in there, worship gets tarred with the same brush.

It is understandable that we Unitarians do not want to surrender to some form of irrational, starry-eyed idolatry at the expense of reason and common sense. It is not necessary, however, to polarize the debate. The word worship does not have to be persona non grata in our communities. We can redeem the word to communicate something meaningful about our services on Sundays, indicating that they are more than clever collections of hymns, readings and lectures.

What if we focussed on the notion of worship as giving honour to that which is greater than us, knowing that this would not be the same for all of us ? What if that could be a broad enough to encompass various versions of deity, as well as non-theistic concepts of our collective values, wisdom, love and strength ? The Reverend Mark Belletini ( First Unitarian Universalist Church in Columbus, OH) writes :

“Whatever the style, Unitarian Universalist services are rooted in our living tradition, which invites the individual to worship within the community. The community remains the locus of the Holy.....we choose to worship together for the strength of many hearts beating in the spirit of shared wisdom.”

Beginning this Fall, the Sunday Services Committee of our fellowship, presents a series of definitions and personal reflections on worship and other “hot button” words . Not because we “know” what they mean and what we should think about them, but as a gift of information, of challenge and an invitation to contemplate, to share and thus, to grow.

**Hanusia Tkaczyk**

# LUF CONTACTS 2012



## OFFICERS OF THE BOARD

President:	Bert Blaauw	344-4052
Vice-President:	Marsha Reinikka	344-9998
Secretary:	vacant	
Treasurer:	Rob Van Wyck	344-7845
Past President:	Ellen Taylor	345-3888
At Large:	Brenda Gillespie	983-2758
	Rosemary Burris	343-9241
	Margaret Wanlin	767-1939
	Elaine Foster-Seargeant	933-4845
	Fred Upshaw	768-2413

## STAFF AND APPOINTED OFFICERS

Administrator	Elaine Sombrutski	344-5980 (Office)	lufship@tbaytel.net
Coordinator of Religious Exploration	Katie Hughdie	344-5980 (Office)	mermaidkh@hotmail.com
Bookkeeper	Nadia LaRussa	344-5980 (Office)	
Lay Chaplains:	Rob Van Wyck	344-7845	
	Susan Tiura	346-4223	
	David Belrose	623-3347	
	Susan Patterson-Gulka	626-8149	
Director of Music :	Heather Morrison	767-8233	
Endowment Fund Directors	Tony Carfagnini (Chair)		
	Carl Rose		
	Wayne Hill		

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND CONTACT PEOPLE

Archives:	Del Dickey	Men's Group	Jim Bishop
Bridge:	Del Dickey	Newsletter:	Elaine Sombrutski
Care Committee:	Carol Ann Brumpton	Nominating:	Ellen Taylor
Fellowship Life/Membership	Bev Leaman	Property:	Bert Blaauw
Finance:	Rob Van Wyck	Children's Religious Exploration:	Katie Hughdie
Green Sanctuary Committee:	Erin Beagle	Sanctuary Coordinator:	Del Dickey
Kitchen:	Alice Neudorf, Audrey Saxberg	Social Responsibility:	Ahti Tolvanen
Lay Chaplaincy:	Carol Ann Brumpton	Sunday Services:	Hanusia Tkaczyk
Library:	Siobhan Malashewski	Tai Chi:	Sita Holland
Adult Religious Exploration	Susan Patterson Gulka		
	Trudi Jones		
Mindfulness:	David Belrose		

## AFFILIATES AND ASSOCIATES

- Canadian Unitarian Council Board (cuc.ca)
- Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice

The opinions expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily reflect those of the newsletter editor or the Board of LUF.

We hope that you enjoy receiving/reading the LUF Letter, provided free to all members and friends. Receiving the LUF Letter via the website, saves money and trees. Please notify the office at 344-5980 if you no longer require the newsletter to be sent by post. Thank you for your contributions to LUF that make it possible to produce the LUF Letter.

### LAKEHEAD UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP

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**Deadline for submissions: 20th of the month**

The newsletter is usually distributed by the first Sunday of each month from September to June inclusive, via LUF website [www.luf.ca](http://www.luf.ca), surface mail or hand delivered.