

Unitarian Church Montreal

Église unitarienne de Montréal

Newsletter- Bulletin

February/février 2009

Worship Calendar

Services start at 10:30 am, unless otherwise noted.

February 1

That Which Was Lost Has Been Found: Seeds, Survival and Sovereignty in India.

Kate Green, Unitarian Service Committee, Manager, Public Engagement, North/South Linkages (See page 3 for more about Kate Green.)

Sandra Hunt, musician

Please bring contributions of non-perishable food for the NDG Food Depot.

February 8

Rev. Dr. Stephen Furrer

Guest minister from the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

February 15

Women and Islam

Rev. Diane Rollert and Shaheen Ashraf.

22 February

10:30 a.m.

Spiritual, Not Religious

Rev. Diane Rollert

12:30 p.m.

Stress et détresse

Christopher Thomson

From our minister

Dedicating Our Children

You have come with stardust in your hair, with the rush of planets in your blood, your heart beating out the seasons of eternity, with a shining in your eyes like the sunlight.

Did you know that your child does not have to be an infant to be dedicated? A child dedication in the Unitarian Universalist tradition is one of the few sacred rituals we share together as a community. It is a covenant, a promise, of love and care that the entire community bestows upon a child.

Perhaps when your child was born you hadn't found Unitarian Universalism yet. Perhaps you weren't sure what to do because the traditions of baptism or naming didn't make sense to you. Perhaps now you'd like to see your child honoured and welcomed into the wider UU community.

Over the years, I've participated in child dedications for children of all ages. Happily, it is never too late to receive love and affirmation. If you'd like to consider a dedication of your child or children, please let me know.

I look forward to sharing this great joy with you,

- Rev. Diane Rollert

Wounded Word of the Month

What does the word SPIRITUALITY mean to you?

Send your thoughts, reflections, musical and artistic expressions to Rev. Diane Rollert. Your responses will be incorporated into the worship service on Sunday, 22 February.

If you'd like to know more, see Diane's sermon, "Reflecting on Wounded Words" at www.ucmtl.ca.

Entre Nous

In Memoriam

Lyndon Dullege, long a member of the church, died on December 26 here in Montreal, at the age of 92, after a lengthy illness. A lifelong Unitarian, he was dedicated by the Rev. Frederick R. Griffin and married to his wife Dorothy by the Rev. Angus Cameron. An energetic volunteer, he served on the Board of Management and took charge of church property, not only the building on Sherbrooke Street, but also a parcel of undeveloped land in the Laurentians. His daughter, Mrs. Lynda Trickey, may be reached at 2 Maitland Drive, Maitland, ON K0E 1P0

Memorial Flowers

Feb. 01 Diana Scott
Feb. 08 Edith Mitchell
Feb. 15 Rhoda Olenick & Myriam Rollert
Feb. 22 Edward Meredith and Alys Judith Pike

New Song Books

- **Barbara Jackson, Senior Warden**

You have probably noticed in many of our grey song books a label saying that the book was donated by a member in honour of a loved one. As we have not had enough song books at some recent services, the Wardens have offered to buy twenty more out of the Memorial Fund. If you have someone you would like to honour in this way, we are inviting you to do so.

The cost of a book is twenty dollars. Make a cheque out to the Unitarian Church of Montreal, mark it clearly as a contribution for a song book, and we will contact you to find out what

you would like written on the book plate.

Membership in a Caring Community

- **David Kersulis**
President, Board of Management

I've been thinking a lot these days about the value of membership in a caring community. Our church is a good example of such a community. We don't just congregate on Sunday mornings and then close the door for the rest of the week. We look out for each other, be it formally or informally, like members of an extended family. This is something we should all cherish and nurture.

This point hit home for me in January when I found myself overloaded with responsibilities, both at church and at work. In December's message I spoke of things "going better than I thought" in describing my duties as President, and on the whole this is still true. However, when activities outside of church become more hectic, it becomes challenging. The great thing about this place is how well we work together in a loving and understanding manner. My thanks to Petrina, our Vice President, for stepping in for me to chair some meetings that I was unable to attend. I also have to thank our minister, Diane, who will suggest delaying or postponing a meeting when she senses that I am getting frazzled.

Our community has lost some long-time members over the last few months. In particular I think of Andy and Jane Hugessen who both died within ten days of each other in December. I met Andy and Jane not

long after I joined this congregation in 1998. They were engaged members of this congregation, participating in all areas of church life. What I remember most about them was the warmth and support they showed to me throughout the years. Our congregation has suffered a big loss and we will miss them dearly.

We must also remember the members and friends of this congregation who are no longer able to participate in congregational life due to limited mobility. Thankfully, we now have a revitalized Caring Network whose important mandate is to keep in touch with these individuals, some of whom were very active in our congregation in the past.

According to our By-Laws, one of the requirements of membership is making a yearly identifiable financial contribution to our operational fund. For every member we have registered in our membership book, we have to pay dues of around \$90 to the Canadian Unitarian Council. We therefore request that members contribute at least \$100 per year to the church in order to maintain their membership status. If you are among those whose financial situation prevents you from making such a contribution, please contact the minister to arrange to maintain your membership status. People who move away but wish to maintain their membership should also make a yearly minimum contribution.

Of course, it takes more than \$100 per year per member to keep this church running. Our last November's pledge campaign to raise funds for 2009 has reached \$173,810 of the \$215,000 we had hoped to raise. We are counting on members who have yet to make

their pledge and those who wish to increase it further to bring home the remaining \$31,000 in the next few months.

We welcomed seven new members to our congregation on the second Sunday of January. I find it very exciting to see so many people making this commitment and becoming active in our community. Let's nurture that.

Looking After Our Back Lot

There are two issues concerning our back lot that we have to work together on – illegal parking and loitering.

Our parking lot, already small, becomes smaller still in winter when snow piles up. If you spot someone parking in the lot who does not subsequently enter the church building, who also does not have an authorized red parking permit, please call the police at 514-280-2222. Give them the license plate number and ask that the car be either towed or ticketed.

Although the snow and cold has reduced the number of people loitering in our garden and causing a disturbance, some have discovered that the temporary winter shelter installed over the RE emergency staircase is a great place to hang out and smoke up. If you see people loitering there, please call 911 and report it to the police. The police have been advised of this problem and have promised to keep an eye on it during their routine patrol.

In either case, once you have made the call, you do not have to wait around for the authorities to show up.

Kate Green and the Unitarian Service Committee

We will welcome Kate Green, Manager of Public Engagement for the USC as our guest speaker during worship on Sunday, February 1.

Her topic: *That Which Was Lost ... Has Been Found: Seeds, Survival and Sovereignty in India*. How can a country of such wealth and diversity be in a food crisis? Where has the knowledge gone that sustained an agricultural base for thousands of years in one of the most fertile regions of the world? Kate's experience with farmers and community seed banks in India has taught her a number of reasons for the food problems today, and how incremental change and tenacity are rebuilding the food system. Read more about the work of the USC at www.usc-canada.org and see a short slide show of the work in India under [resources/A/V/Slide shows](#) on the USC website.

UCM 2009 pledge campaign

The Board of Management has set a target of \$200,000 for the 2009 pledge campaign. As of January 21 we had received \$173,810 in pledges. Given these uncertain economic times, the Board realizes that our target may not be reached. However, our treasurer Bob Edgar is confident that, providing we get \$185,000 in pledges, we can operate without budget cutbacks.

We are hereby making an appeal for your 2009 pledge if you have not

pledged as yet. If you have pledged, please consider an increase of ten percent.

If you wish to pledge or increase your pledge, please contact Verna Litwack, Administrator, at the Church office at 514-485-9933; e-mail office@ucmtl.ca or Petrina Lee Poy, Vice President of the Board of Management at 514-485-5555; e-mail: petrina_lee_poy@yahoo.com

Le Groupe francophone

Le 18 janvier à 10 h 30, nous étions 12 enfants, au moins quatre adultes, et une adolescente à participer au programme d'éducation religieuse en français, une participation record bien chaleureuse ! Nous avons exploré ensemble des idées à propos des cycles de la vie et de la mort. Nous avons réfléchi à notre lien avec la nature à travers des coquillages, des cailloux, et des pommes de pin que nous avons tenus dans nos mains et partagés en rond, en collant aussi d'autres objets de la nature dans un grand cercle coloré. Nous avons partagé nos joies et nos peines, nous avons chanté, et nous avons bougé ensemble.

Le jeudi 12 février à midi : Réunion du Comité francophone pour préparer la célébration du 22 février, entre autres. Vous êtes tous et toutes invités à y participer. Apportez votre lunch.

Le dimanche 15 février à 10 h 30 : Éducation religieuse pour tous les enfants en français (toujours le 3e dimanche du mois) par Lisa et Rita. Au cours de cette quatrième leçon, nous explorerons le sens de la vie et des questions telles que : Pourquoi sommes-nous en vie ? Quelles sont

les actions que l'on juge importantes d'entreprendre dans nos vies ? Et qu'est-ce qui nous remplit de joie et de satisfaction ? (Les petits et ceux qui ne désirent pas participer ont des programmes en anglais.)

Voir p. 1, "Worship Calendar" pour plus d'informations sur les services francophones à venir. Communiquez avec Rita à rita_angelina2002@yahoo.ca si vous avez besoin de gardiens pour vos enfants, et ce, avant le mercredi 18 février, afin qu'elle puisse réserver les gardiens.

Groups and Activities

Social and Environmental Concerns

WOMEN AND ISLAM

Sunday, February 15, 11:45 am
Thomas Room

Contact: Mary-Louise Engels:
514 487-2665, mlengels@sympatico.ca

Please note the change of time. There will be a brief news and planning session.

Bring your coffee and a snack. We will then join others in the Sanctuary to welcome our guest, Shaheen Ashraf. She will speak at the worship service on "Women in Islam", and will then be available for questions and dialogue in the Sanctuary at 12:15 pm. Don't miss this event!

Drumming Circle

Drumming Circle will be held from 7:00 to 8:30 pm on the third Thursday of every month in the Youth Room. Everyone is welcome.

After an initial meeting on Thursday, **January 29**, a group of us will meet regularly on the third Thursday of each month to drum, share stories, and extend our sense of community. Group drumming has been shown to have great benefits both physically and emotionally, as it allows us to meditate in a simple way that links back to the most fundamental sound of life: the mother's heartbeat. Nourished by many spiritual traditions, Drum Circles are forming all over the world as people come together to explore the benefits of drumming.

The dates from Feb-June will be on the following Thursdays: February 19, March 19, April 16, May 21, June 18.

Bring a drum (any kind) if you have one, and also shakers, rattles and other rhythm instruments. We can usually help with extra drums if needed. No previous drumming experience or musical training is needed.

Members and friends are welcome. Contact Ann Beer (514 426 1204) or Allen Lobo (514 484 3014) for further information.

Caroline Balderston Parry's "Soul Collage" Continues

The "Soul Collage" BidNite workshop I offered in January was terrific fun – in fact, after introducing the process, it was hard to stop people from cutting, pasting, and searching for more powerful images! I've decided to continue anchoring collage sessions for anyone interested. I envision an ongoing longer monthly session, held on Saturdays for a minimum of four hours, at least over the winter.

If you would like to share what I have learned about the process, I will be happy to bring you up to speed and/or show you the book I use and give you web references. Interested UUers are welcome to join me, working in the Garden Room in silence or with quiet meditative music in the background, for the first open session from 10 am to 4 pm on Saturday, February 14. You may, if you wish, bring favourite photos or images, also magazines, old cards, calendars, art catalogues, or photography books you are willing to donate. Bring a brown bag lunch – come early or late, whenever it suits you.

Questions? You may contact me at the Pattersons, 514-931-3180.

Religious Explorations Discussion Group

Sunday, February 1
12:15 pm
Location: Thomas Room

"Change" is the new buzzword. We will briefly talk about the proposed change of name for this group and then discuss the following: What would you like to change in your life and in your world? How can we effect change in the world?

Please note: This is not a closed group, all are welcome to attend our meetings.

Contact: Christine Rourke 514 -761-0669

Midday Meal with Music

Wednesday, February 18
 Scrabble and Bridge: 10 am
 Lunch: 12:30 pm;
 Music: 1:30 pm
 To reserve, please call Ruth di
 Giovanni at 514-934-4956 by
 Sunday, Feb. 15.

Book Discussion Group

River Thieves

Wednesday February 18, 7 pm,
 Thomas Room
 Contact: Kathy, 514-488-9608
 This debut novel by Canadian poet
 Michael Crummey juxtaposes
 timeless themes--tensions, rifts,
 violence, depravity--with a little-
 known historical atrocity, the
 extinction of the Beothuk first nation
 in Newfoundland. "There's a literary
 renaissance underway just north of
 us, and Crummey's astonishing debut
 novel is one of the brightest jewels in
 its crown" (Kirkus Review Service).

Seeking the Sacred in Stories

Facilitated by Rev. Diane Rollert
 Tuesday, 10 February 2009

12:00- 1:15 p.m.

We meet in the Garden Room on the
 first lower level of the church.

Bring a brown bag lunch. This month
 we will read "Working for a Living"
 by Alice Munro, from her book, *The
 View from Castle Rock*.

For more information, contact the
 church office.

Religious Education

- **Caroline Balderston Parry, DRE**

Noticed the New Bulletin Boards? Know About Mystery Friends?

Thanks to our custodian Helmut
 Strohmeyer who put them up, our
 Religious Education activities and
 ideas have two new display boards in
 the stairwell. I'm pleased to expand
 the visibility of our programs through
 them, and grateful for various
 donated materials. Watch for a "love"
 theme as February starts – and mid-
 month, just after Valentine's Day, our
 seven pairs of UCM Mystery Friends
 will be revealed to one another at a
 special "hearty" lunch on Sunday,
 February 15.

Didn't know about Mystery Friends?
 I didn't either, before becoming your
 DRE, but I want to encourage and
 expand this program of adults and
 children sending one another letters
 and notes using pseudonyms, getting
 to know –and love! each other in
 special ways. Hendrik Boom has
 been the devoted coordinator of this
 program for several years, and he'll
 be grateful for your decision to join,
 any time—or just sign up next
 September!

OWL classes for K-2 children and their parents have begun!

You've heard of the proverbial "busy
 bees"; what about "Overworked
 OWLs"? Carlene Gardner, UCM's
 Our Whole Lives (OWL) coordinator,
 and Janet Clancy, lead teacher, have
 been really busy getting the new class

up and running. . . although perhaps
 (hopefully) not literally
 "overworked", they definitely are
 excellent, painstaking volunteers, and
 I thank them! As you read this, they
 have in place a group of about half a
 dozen families that is meeting for a
 series of classes this month and next,
 held after service and lunch together.
 Ivy O'Reilly and Lauren Del Rio are
 assisting Janet, and a good,
 informative time is being had by all.

OWL is our unique Unitarian
 Universalist sexuality education
 program, with carefully prepared
 curricula for different age groups. It
 equips participants with accurate,
 age-appropriate information in six
 inter-related subject areas such as
 human development and
 relationships. OWL-related books are
 available to borrow or buy, and the
 newly purchased DVD "Raising
 Health Kids: Families Talk About
 Sexual Health" can be borrowed for
 short periods, even if you're not in
 the class. Extra thanks to Elizabeth
 Anglin for ferrying OWL books here
 from her US address, saving us
 money!

Want more information about the
 UUA's OWL programs? Check out:
<http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/ourwhole/index.shtml>

Early Christians emphasized Paradise, not Crucifixion

This continues my article in the January newsletter, based on notes from my sessions at the LREDA Fall Conference with Dr. Rebecca Parker. Many thanks to Cym Gomery for helping shape it all into this text!

- Caroline Balderston Parry

The early church framed diversity as a sign of the presence of Spirit-- witness the ecological diversity of our earthly Paradise. The Spirit of Life works in each of us according to our particularity; therefore we have to honour and cherish our own and each other's uniqueness!

According to one second century writer, "The glory of God is a human being fully alive!" Sadly, this aspect of Christianity was later to be quashed by redemptive theology.

Early Christians underwent rigorous preparations to be baptized, all to heighten their physical capacity to see Paradise in the present and their moral capacity to be transfigured, to be Christ.

Communion in early Christianity was

a thanksgiving ceremony-- receiving foods at the feast nourished us for living in the world as Paradise. There was no division of humanity into the "saved" and the "damned. Instead, the attitude was that we are all meant to be here and to manifest our goodness. This holistic faith taught its followers to love their bodies and themselves, to live with reverence for themselves and each other, and to respect the earth. Believers also felt themselves to be in communion with those who had died yet were with us still (think of *Dia de los Muertos*, still celebrated in South America today).

Fourth century Ephram of Syria taught that life requires the richness of a caring response to each other. This beautiful theology was superseded by Charlemagne as the first Christian military ruler, using violence to force populations to convert. Charlemagne's rule led to violent images of crucifixion and a new understanding of the Eucharist as a re-enactment of the crucifixion of Jesus.

Thus the early church lost its sense of Paradise as here and now, lost its culture of nonviolence, and lost its sense of humanity as dignified,

sanctified and worthy. The Crusades became a mode of penance for sin -- "killing for Christ" became a legitimate way to obtain Paradise. But we Unitarian Universalists understand that categorizing peoples as "good" or "bad", or "saved" versus "damned" wrongly creates a false "us and them" mentality. If we are all children of the Spirit of Life, says Parker, we must re-orient our hearts and souls so that we drink deeply of the waters of Life, starting from a place of abundance and serenity.

By performing acts of loving kindness we become capable of seeing that Paradise is here. With the image of Paradise fixed firmly in our consciousness, we can look with love and gratitude at what we already have, and at what we may need to defend or repair, and take action, as the waters of Paradise flow around us, and the breezes of Paradise waft over us.

Rebecca Parker and Brock's recent book is titled Saving Paradise. Read more about their ideas in "This Present Paradise" on the UUWorld Website, <http://www.uuworld.org/ideas/articles/107992.shtml>

Want to help show off our church?

Would you like the opportunity to help show off our church, physically and spiritually? The Canadian Centre for Ecumenism runs a program called "Our Neighbours' Faith" which allows people to visit a different place of worship each month. Muslim mosques, Sikh temples, synagogues are naturals for this sort of activity. However this year, for the first time, our church will welcome people of different faiths who come here to find out about Unitarianism.

Our guests will be coming at 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 19th. Wouldn't it be wonderful if a cross-section of our congregation could be here, including RE, our various interest groups, and members who attend our weekly services? Since there are usually light refreshments after this neighbourly visit, those of you who make wonderful sandwiches and/or cakes/cookies could show our visitors how well nourished Unitarians are by providing a small offering!

Diane will attend, so if you are worried about "not knowing the answer" to a visitor's question you can be assured of her knowledgeable support. On the other hand, I can't think of a better way to introduce people to Unitarianism than for them to hear our own stories and the reasons why we are part of the UCM community.

NOTE: These groups tend to be bilingual, so French speakers are cordially invited to help us be good hosts.

Call Krystyna Matula for details and to offer your presence - 514-287-0814 H. - 514-965-2167 C.

p.s. Here is a sneak preview of what our online ad will look like:

Thursday, 19 March 2009 7-9 pm

Introducing the Unitarian Church of Montreal

You've heard of them, but who are they? For two centuries, Unitarians have welcomed liberal religious seekers in Montreal. Today, they are a diverse, open and growing religious community whose members from various faith traditions join together on a personal spiritual journey. Come find out what Unitarians are all about! Lively discussion and great refreshments promised.

5035 de Maisonneuve West (corner of Bulmer)

Métro Vendôme

Unitarian Church of Montreal/ Église unitarienne de Montréal

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Mouvement unitarien universaliste au Québec:
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Memorial flowers: Joan Watt 514 937-8456

Lay Chaplains:
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Nicoline Guerrier, 450 458-5860,
nguerrier@hudson.net

March newsletter submissions

E-mail your submissions to news@ucmtl.ca
or place them in the mailbox upstairs. Please
include your name, phone number and email
address with your article or notice.

Deadline: Wednesday, February 18 at 8:00
pm.

Attachments must be in Word or plain text,
*but we prefer that you put your article in
the body of your email.* Please note that we
can't open WordPerfect docs or edit PDFs.

CARING NETWORK

The coordinators for February are:

February 1 to 14: Marion Blake 514-482-8914
marion.blake@sympatico.ca

February 15 to 28: Phyllis Greggain 514-366-0618
norm.greggain@sympatico.ca

If you know of someone in our Unitarian community
who needs help, please get in touch right away.

We have over 20 people registered as carers—individuals
happy to make hospital or home visits, make telephone
check-up calls, prepare and/or deliver food, or act as
chauffeurs. If there are other needs, we will do our best to
satisfy them.

Drivers Needed !

The Caring Network needs volunteer drivers to pick up or drop
off UCM members and friends for church services, doctors'
appointments, hospital visits, etc. If you can help us out, please
get in touch with one of the February coordinators (above).

UCM Board Members

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