

Unitarian Church of Montreal Église unitarienne de Montréal



Newsletter

January / janvier 2009

Worship Calendar

Services start at 10:30 am, unless otherwise noted

January 4

Celebrating the New Year in Song and Story

Brian Brice (Director of Carmina Choir) and David Kersulis

A celebration of song and story to uplift the spirit. We will sing songs from our hymn book and read heartwarming stories. Song and story suggestions appreciated. (david.kersulis@videotron.ca)

January 11

New Member Sunday

Being the Perfect Stranger: Are We Voyeurs, Thieves or Respectful Guests?

Rev. Diane Rollert

Introduction to a series of services exploring the many voices of Islam.

January 18

The Many Voices of Islam

Rev. Diane Rollert and Guests

Part One in a once-a-month winter series to deepen our understanding of Islam.

January 25

God, Another Wounded Word

Rev. Diane Rollert with contributions from the congregation

From our minister

*The old one in our hearts made youthful,
just like a child at play,
the bending back now straighten'd
so in our hearts we pray.*

—Finnish, English translation by Jeanne Maki

So goes the third verse of "Has Summer Come Now Dawning." Summer dawns in the darkness of winter, as the sun continues to slowly return after the winter solstice. The words seem appropriate as we enter the New Year of 2009.

Our backs were surely bent with the sadness of loss in 2008. We have said goodbye to many beloved members. Some have died and some have moved. Change is constant through the cycles of the seasons and the cycles of our lives.

As we've sung and cried together at memorial services, many of us have found ourselves contemplating our own mortality. Sandra and I have both gotten our share of inquiries about music and readings, "just in case." So this month, I'm enclosing a form for memorial instructions.

Whether you are a member or a friend, I invite you to fill out the form. Let us know your thoughts and we will file them away for safekeeping. Taking the time to do so can be a relief for you and for your loved ones.

Even as the soil is covered with a blanket of snow, renewal is ongoing. In the darkness of winter, seeds are storing up nutrients. We gather closer for warmth. It's a good time to come together to deepen in understanding.

Thanks to the Social and Environmental Concerns Committee, we'll begin a focus on interfaith work this winter, reaching out to our Muslim neighbours. Thanks to the Communications Committee, a new website is about to be launched. Thanks to our young adults, we may see new initiatives in worship and small group ministry. Meeting with our young adult (18-35) group and their new co-leaders, Rhett Parnas and Telyn Kusalik, has truly warmed my heart.

There's a lot going on to keep us warm this winter. May there be lots of room for the child at play in all our hearts. Happy New Year!

In peace,
Diane

In Memory of Andy and Jane Hugessen

How sad it has been to say goodbye to Andy and Jane Hugessen. Jane died on 25 November, and Andy followed her less than two weeks later on December 5. Together they had shared a deeply loving relationship that shined upon their family and all of us.

We have many stories to share, enough to fill an entire newsletter, of all that Andy and Jane have meant to this community. He was an Olympic champion, and the son of a senator. She was an accomplished early childhood educator and amateur photographer. But what we knew of them was so much more.

Andy and Jane were athletes, skiers, hikers, birders, world travelers, party hosts and lovers of fun and of life together. Together they raised four children and shared their joy with nine grandchildren, loving and encouraging them to live out their dreams. They shared the ups and downs of life, of parenting, and growing older.

They shared their wisdom and friendship with all ages here.

They touched our lives in ways that we can never measure. What will Sunday morning be without Jane to warm us with her smile and make us laugh, or Andy to capture us heart and soul with his caring deep blue eyes?

Jane and Andy became Unitarians in the Lakeshore Congregation in the early 1960s. They were members of the UCM long before their decision to move to Westmount to be closer to family, doctors and this community. They brought their joie de vivre and stayed actively involved long into their

twilight years; Jane teaching in RE, Andy singing as the most essential bass in the choir, providing homemade wine and beer, and hosting events at their Lake Anne cottage for Bidnite. Even in this past year, both had plans to stay involved, offering support in many areas of church life.

Jane had spent the last 13 years of her life battling illness, long outliving everyone's expectations. She was courageous in a way that was visible and inspiring to us all. Andy was both generous and quiet, but he was as brave and determined as Jane. Their last year of life had been hard as they both struggled with their health. Still, it was a full and happy year with children, grandchildren and friends at their side.

They both expressed much gratitude for the care and support of this community. "You are good friends," they would say. They were good friends to us. They were pillars of this congregation and we will always miss them.

"Look well to this day," they would have said, paraphrasing Jane's favourite Salutation to the Dawn.

For yesterday is but a dream, and tomorrow is only a vision;

But today, well lived, makes every yesterday a dream of happiness

And every tomorrow a vision of hope.



What to get someone who has everything...

Last June, in one of our most popular fund-raisers ever, we raised over \$5,000 (U.S.) for solar cookers for Darfuri women living in Chad refugee camps. At the recent Fair Trade Fair, we raised more than \$500 and customers requested more cards to send as Christmas gifts.

The "solar cooker solution" to your gift-buying dilemma is ethical, simple, environmentally sound – and an inexpensive \$15. It is above all an imminently practical way to help victims of the ongoing genocidal Darfur conflict. You can contribute by cash or cheque (payable to the Unitarian Church of Montreal, writing "solar cookers" in the subject line), in multiples of \$15, the cost of one solar cooker kit.

You'll get an income tax receipt at the end of the year. These gifts will help women refugees, who will not have to venture into dangerous territory outside the camp perimeter in search of fuel. You will also reduce pressure on scarce resources of firewood, and you will please your recipients!

The attractive gift cards, featuring colourful photos of the women and their cookers, are produced by our own Paco (aka Frank Greene). They will be available following the Sunday services at a table just inside the door in Phoenix Hall.

Contact: Mary-Louise Engels (Social and Environmental Concerns Committee), 514-487-2665, mlengels@sympatico.ca

Entre Nous

We rejoice with Mary Donovan and Merry Levering who were married in Massachusetts on December 13. Sadly, we also say goodbye as they have returned to Knoxville, Tennessee. They will be especially missed by the choir.

We say another sad goodbye to Don and Nancy Bliss who have returned to Maryland. They brought with them much experience from the Cedar Lane UU Congregation. We are grateful for all they shared with us.

We hold in our hearts the family of Jane and Andy Hugessen. Jane died on November 25th. We celebrated her life in a memorial service on December 6th. Andy died less than two weeks after Jane on December 5th.

A memorial service celebrating the life of Andy Hugessen will be held on Sunday, January 11, in the sanctuary at 2:00 pm.

We hold our hearts the family of Ann Beer. Ann's mother died suddenly on November 25th in Wales at the age of 87.

We hold in our hearts the family of Debbie Esplin. Debbie's mother, Dr. Barbara Esplin died on November 30th.

We hold in our hearts the family of Reginald (Reg) Webb Redston, a member of the Simpson Street Church, who died 28 November at the age of 96.

Katimavik Hosts Needed

Founded in 1977, the Katimavik program is based on the concept of service learning and provides volunteer work experience, group living and a learning program focused on leadership skills, official languages, the environment, cultural discovery and a healthy lifestyle.

In Montreal, a group of 17- to 21-year-olds live for three months in a group home in Villeray. In the middle of their three months, they get a nine-day break from group living during which they are billeted with host families. They are not to be treated like guests: they continue to go to work each weekday and, other than that, will participate in the daily activities of their hosts. If you would like to host a Katimavik participant for nine days in February, please contact Jean-Michel Naud, Project Leader, at 514-504-8493 or Karine Gravel, Project Coordinator, at 514-208-2029. More information at www.katimavik.org.

Pathway to Membership – Special “Make Up” Session

Would you like to become a member of the Unitarian Church of Montreal?

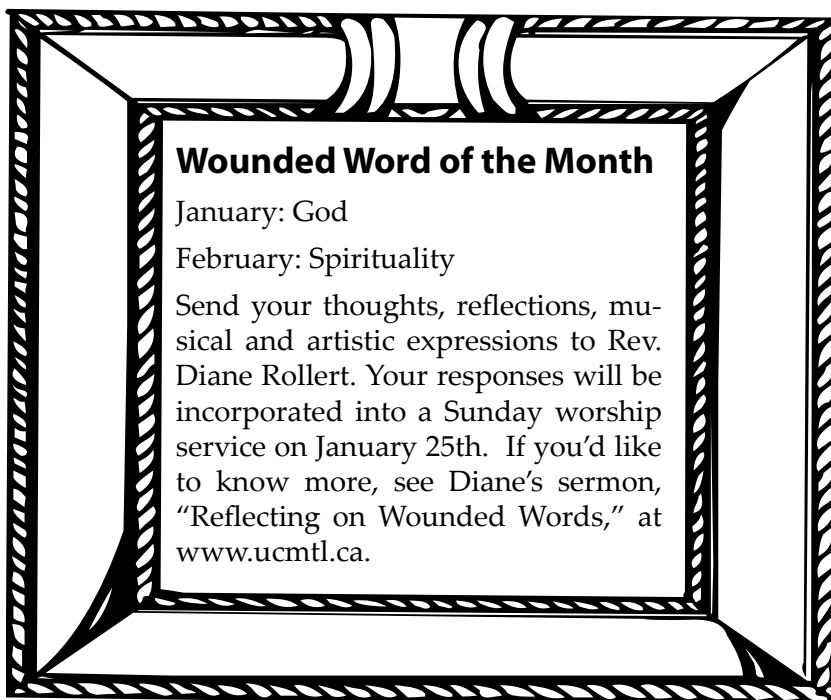
Join our minister for a morning workshop.

Date: Saturday, 10 January
Time: 9:00 a.m. – noon.

New members will be welcomed during the worship service on January 11. RSVP to the office (514) 485-9933 or office@ucmtl.ca and let us know if you will need childcare.

NUUS welcomes new wordsmith

Cym Gomery is a UCM member who has been attending the church since Nov. 2006. A technical writer by profession, Cym joins UCM's team of wordsmiths to help hammer out a well rounded congregational newsletter.



Activities

SUNDAYS

Religious Explorations Group

Date: January 4

Time: 12:30 pm

Location: Children's Chapel

Contact: Denny Meyer

Topic: Let's consider "what's in a name?"

Social and Environmental Concerns

Date: January 18

Time: 12:15 pm

Location: Thomas Room

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

Voices of Islam: Today, during the worship service, Diane will introduce the first guest speakers in the series on Islam. Following the service and coffee hour, the speakers will be available at our meeting to listen and respond to your comments and questions. Don't miss this special opportunity to learn more about our Muslim neighbours!

Time permitting there will also be updates on ongoing plans and projects. You don't have to be a member to attend. All are welcome!

MONDAYS

Parts in Peace Choir

Dates: Mondays

Time: 7:30 pm

Location: Sanctuary or Children's Chapel

Contact: Sandra Hunt, 514-484-5559

We have a good and faithful crowd of about 20 members, with attendance for each rehearsal around 12 to 15 warblers every week. But we

would like to be more numerous! We just love the sound of harmony in large quantities. Our choir is really fun - come and try us out: 6:15 pm for potluck dinner in Phoenix Hall, 7:30 pm for rehearsal in the Sanctuary.

Mindfulness Meditation Practice

Date: Monday January 19,

Wednesdays: January 14 and 28

Time: 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Location: Children's Chapel

Contact: Allen Lobo 514 484-3014, radiantandfree@gmail.com

The Mindfulness Meditation Practice is open to both those who are new to the method and also those who may have meditated before. Included in the practice will be an explanation of Mindfulness Meditation; a period of sitting meditation; some stretching (during which are also included massage and laughter, etc.); guided meditations; walking meditation; and a period for questions, sharing and singing.

Mindfulness Meditation is especially useful for busy people, and those who wish to bring more awareness and enjoyment into their stressed lives.

TUESDAYS

Seeking the Sacred in Stories

Led by Rev. Diane Rollert

Monthly Brown Bag Lunch Group

Dates: Tuesdays, January 13, February 10, March 10, April 14, May 12 and June 9

Time: Noon to 1:00 pm

Location: Garden Room (formerly known as the "Former Ministers' Room)

We meet in the Garden Room on the first lower level of the church. Bring a brown bag lunch. This winter we'll be reading short stories from Alice Munro and others. Copies of the stories are available from the office, or from Diane's mailbox.

Carmina Choir

Dates: Tuesdays

Time: 7:30 pm

Location: Phoenix Hall

Contact: Keith Robinson 514-931-9028 or Brian Brice 514-843-6497

New members in all voices are very welcome. The ability to read is not necessary and there is no audition. Audio aids are provided to supplement rehearsals.

Bring a sense of humour and good will—with a black binder, if possible.

Play Group

Dates: Tuesdays and Thursdays starting January 6)

Time: 10:00 am-noon

Location: Nursery

Contact: Melani Litwack, 514-488-9884

We welcome children under five on Tuesdays and Thursdays on a drop-in basis accompanied by a (grand)parent or caregiver. Pack a snack for your child(ren). Coffee is provided. Open to all, whether church members or not. No charge but a donation of \$2/day per family is suggested.



WEDNESDAYS**Mindfulness Meditation Practice**

Dates: Wednesdays: January 14 and 28

Time: 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Location: Children's Chapel

Contact: Allen Lobo 514 484-3014, radiantandfree@gmail.com

See the entry under **Mondays** for a full description.

Midday Meal with Music

Date: December 17

Times: 10:00 am Scrabble and Bridge; 12:30 pm Lunch; 1:30 pm Music

Contact: Ruth di Giovanni., 514-934-4956

Please call Ruth at 514-934-4956 by Sunday, December 14 at 8:00 pm so the cooks will buy enough food.

THURSDAYS**Play Group**

See *Tuesdays*.

SATURDAYS**Walking Group**

Date/time: Saturdays, 10:00 am

Contact: Diana Kleins, 514-747-9375 or Krystyna Matula, 514-287-0814

For those who enjoy nature and companionship, join us for walks in and around Montreal at a moderate pace and in a pleasant, informal atmosphere. A stop for refreshments after at a nearby coffee shop to plan the next week's meeting place/walk completes the morning.

Special Events**Yellow Door Choir Concert: "A million acts of green"**

The Yellow Door Choir will be performing in the UCM Sanctuary on Saturday January 30 and Sunday January 31 from 7:00 to 10 p.m. The theme of the evening will be "the environment". There will be an intermission with light refreshments. All proceeds will go to Équiterre. For tickets, contact Cym Gomery of the SECC 514 369-8933, or the Yellow Door Choir: 514-738-9052.

Spirit Play Conference at UCM, Spring 2009

UCM will host the first annual Spirit Play Conference and Training Program in the world! Spirit Play training will take place on Thursday, April 30, and the conference will be held on Saturday, May 1 and Sunday, May 2.

Spirit Play is based on the Montessori philosophy of education and is one of the most dynamic and interesting new trends in Unitarian Religious Education.

As we are expecting people from all over North America, we will need lots of people to help with food preparation and home hospitality, among other things. So please mark you calendars now and plan to be involved. For further information about Spirit Play, check out www.spiritplay.net.

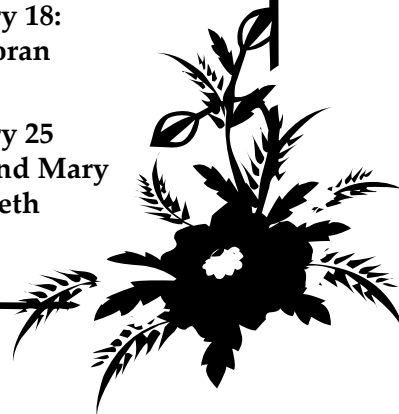
If you are interested in being Spirit-Play-trained or in helping us host this program, please contact Shawn Dohring (dohrings@yahoo.com) or 514 461-1388

Memorial Flowers

January 11
Stuart, Gen and Marie
Steventon

January 18:
Iris Horan
White

January 25
Tom and Mary
Elizabeth
Thach



Religious Education

The sacred community is essential to the sacred life

In October I attended the LREDA [Liberal Religious Educators' Association] fall conference in Albuquerque, NM, thanks to this year's ample RE budget! Titled "Building a Multi-generational Faith; Creating Wholeness in Our Congregations", the conference featured Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker as keynote speaker. I came away wholly inspired and wanting to share my gleanings – first at the RE teacher breakfast on November 30th. Thanks to Cym Gomery, half of them are here – more next month!

The Five Pillars

Dr. Parker views congregational life as a concentration of lives. Contrary to Western dogma, in which the individual reigns supreme and independence is venerated, Parker's model insists that members of a church community work collectively to generate wholeness – individual members are not whole by themselves! Once one accepts that community is the cornerstone of sacred life, the question becomes, how do we build this sacred community?

The church community can borrow from the concept of five "pillars" recommended for UU youth programs. The five pillars, adapted for the entire congregation, are as follows:

1. Multi-generational leadership
2. Multi-generational community building
3. Multi-generational social justice work
4. Worship for all ages
5. Learning for all ages

(Note there is a more recent sixth pillar, about youth/adult relations, which is as-

sumed in these five). We can see the multiple colours and layers of love's rainbow in a multigenerational, multicultural ministry, creating and sustaining congregations that embody wholeness.

Just another day in Paradise

Rebecca Parker and Rita Brock are the authors of *Saving Paradise*; Parker explained a lot of its thesis at the conference. [You can also read their feature article in *UU World*, Summer 2008, at www.uuworld.org].

"Paradise" is the place that embodies wholeness, peace, and justice. This is a theological framework for both Christianity and Judaism, faiths the authors support, although they are very critical of the theology of the crucifixion, also known as "redemptive theology." They point out that the nineteenth century Universalist, Hosea Ballou, among others, rejected the idea of God requiring the death of his son to redeem the world.

While researching another book, *Proverbs of Ashes*, Parker and Brock discovered that Christianity existed for almost one thousand years without any images of Jesus being crucified. What was present were images of Paradise on earth. Genesis describes the rivers of Paradise as encircling the world! Interestingly, mosques still include fountains symbolizing the waters of Paradise.

Early Christians saw the Church as the lens through which to see the world as Paradise. After all, if together we can't support one another in seeing the beauty of the world, we can't save it. These Christians saw Paradise as the place where the struggle to live in harmony takes place, all the while affirming the goodness of life, the all-pervasive presence of the Divine. Paradise wasn't all innocent and sweetness – but violence could not dominate, nor could evil disrupt the goodness completely. The early

church existed to encourage people to do the work of justice and peace-making. I love how this church does do exactly that NOW!

- Caroline Balderston Parry

Next month: further insights from Rebecca Parker.

Did you know we have a terrific RE Library?

It's in the Darwin Room and open for borrowing on Sundays and during RE Office hours on weekdays. We have a display rack of current books in the downstairs foyer, and also on the coat rack shelves outside the Garden Room (Nursery level). Please sign out whatever you borrow. Ivy O'Reilly, recent and very welcome new member on the R.E. Committee (also lead teacher for the Junior Youth class), is coordinating R.E. library books, and she welcomes your suggestions for new titles. The entire list should be available on the new website soon.

At the LREDA conference in October, I bought a number of new books, including:

- *What in the World Do You Do When Your Parents Divorce? A Survival Guide for Kids*, by Kent Winchester and Roberta Beyer, Free Spirit Publishing, 2001
- *A Child's Book of Blessings and Prayers*, Collected by Eliza Blanchard, Skinner House Books, 2008
- *Unitarian Universalism Is a Really Long Name*, by Jennifer Dant, Skinner House Books, 2006
- *Meet Jesus, The Life and Lessons of a Beloved Teacher*, by Lynn Tuttle Gunney, Skinner House Books, 2007
- *Pot-pourri 2008, Poems and Stories by Young Authors*, *Poemes*

et Nouvelles de Jeunes Auteurs;
edited by Michel Lavoie, Ian Roy and JC Sulzenko, published by the Friends of the Ottawa Public Library Association

- *What's The Big Secret? Talking About Sex with Girls and Boys*, by Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc Brown, Little Brown and Company, 1997

Thanks to Yvonne Vandersluis for her donation of Earth Fire Water Air, and also to the good fairies who have left me several anonymous gifts (I love the placemats!).

News from the Junior Youth Class

Through their "It Starts With Me" curriculum, the Junior Youth students are exploring their own feelings about social activism and what it means to them—how to participate actively in their own lives, and how to contribute to the lives of others around them. What makes our community, how do we fit into it, and how does that community fit into the global community? The students put together beautiful collages to represent themselves, each one unique. They began from the middle with a circle representing "self" and moved outward with additional circles representing "immediate Family, extended Family and community." They assembled colourful and beautiful works of art – see them in the Darwin Room or on our website – enjoy!

Plans are afoot for the group's Community Service Project to give time and energy to "Rosie's Animal Adoption", as well as for a sleepover on January 17th and 18th featuring the "Junior Youth UCM Movie" that everyone worked so hard on last year. Remember, we are grateful for your support. and you are always welcome to join us downstairs and be a part of our Junior Youth class!

Jr. Youth Team: Alain Lefevre: al.lefevre.1937@gmail.com; Allen Lobo: radiantandfree@gmail.com; Henrietta Parnas: rhetta.p@gmail.com; Ivy O'Reilly: irishivy@gmail.com

Le Groupe francophone

Le jeudi 8 janvier 2009 à midi : Réunion du Comité francophone pour préparer les activités du mois de février. Vous êtes tous et toutes invités à y participer. Apportez votre lunch.

Le dimanche 18 janvier à 10 h 30 : Éducation religieuse pour tous les enfants en français (toujours le 3e dimanche du mois) par Lisa et Rita. Les petits et ceux qui ne désirent pas participer ont des programmes en anglais.

Le dimanche 25 janvier à 12 h 30 : Célébration en français au Sanctuaire (toujours le 4e dimanche). Le thème sera annoncé dans le Week at a Glance. Communiquez avec Rita à rita_angelina2002@yahoo.ca si vous avez besoin d'un gardien pour vos enfants, et ce, avant le mercredi 21 janvier, afin qu'elle puisse réserver les gardiens.

Le jeudi 29 janvier 2009 à 19 h 30 : Conférence de Rodrigue Tremblay, professeur émérite à l'Université de Montréal, à l'église unitarienne de Montréal. Il nous parlera de son nouveau livre intitulé *Le code pour une éthique globale*. Ce livre, publié chez les Éditions Liber, sera disponible dès le 22 janvier 2009.

Cette conférence aura lieu dans le cadre des activités du Mouvement unitarien universaliste au Québec (MUUQ). Elle sera suivie d'une période de questions.

Entrée libre. Renseignements : Hannelore Poncelet à hanniponcelet@hotmail.com

Que l'année 2009 vous apporte l'amour, la joie et la santé !

The Covered Garden

Covered Garden volunteers welcome Baby Sara

The latest baby born to a refugee at the YMCA in the old Reddy Memorial Hospital is a little girl named Sara. She has an older brother called Hezekiel, three years old, and they live in one of the hospital rooms with their mother who is from Nigeria. Bob Wright and I paid them a visit at the end of November and presented the new mother with a bag of baby gifts, pajamas, shirts, washcloths, towels, receiving blankets, bib, hat and a lots of diapers and also a fire truck for the little boy. It is not always easy to become a big brother with all the attention focused on the new baby!

The presents were gratefully received and the mother has told the people in the centre how very happy she is to have them. It is indeed rewarding to see how much the items we can buy with our collected money can mean to someone who has so little. So far one baby boy and five little girls have each received a layette from us.

The winter clothing collection was again very successful with lots of warm sweaters, hats, mitts and jackets, and an assortment of toys piled on our corner table in Phoenix Hall. All have been transported to the Covered Garden Project by Bob and his helpers just in time for the really cold weather and the first snowstorm of the season. Perfect timing!

Thank you to all who have contributed to this project.

Christina Duvander

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Mouvement unitarien universaliste au Québec:
www.uuqc.ca

Key People at the UCM

Minister: Reverend Diane Rollert 514-485-7654,
dianerollert@ucmtl.ca

Minister Emeritus: Reverend Charles Eddis
514-934-1535, eddis@ucmtl.ca

Administrator: Verna Litwack 514-485-9933,
office@ucmtl.ca

President: David Kersulis 514-365-3191,
david.kersulis@videotron.ca

Director of Religious Education: Caroline Balderston Parry, dre@ucmtl.ca

Church Musician: Sandra Hunt 514-484-5559,
sandra.muriel.hunt@gmail.com

Custodian: Helmut Strohmeyer 514-485-9933

Memorial flowers: Joan Watt 514-937-8456

Lay Chaplains:

Ann Beer 514-426-120, ann_beer@hotmail.com
Nicoline Guerrier, 450-458-5860, nguerrier@hudson.net

February 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 to your article or notice.

Deadline: Wednesday, January 21 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 coordinator for January is:

Nancy Eddis, 514-934-1535, eddis@ucmtl.ca.

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

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

If you would like to be part of this network, please contact the coordinator.

UCM Board Members

Vice President (interim)

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petrina_lee_poy@yahoo.com

Treasurer

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