

## December Service Theme: Story

December's theme will be explored through personal and spiritual stories—those that we tell about ourselves, those that are hard to tell, and those stories that have held the renewal of hope and love for human beings for thousands of years.



us, and they bring gifts to the child. Together we celebrate every new birth.  
• Choir sings.

### **DEC 6** Wisdom from the World's Religions

*Harold Rosen*

*Coordinators: Nancy Rupert & Marilyn Médén*

Harold Rosen, a former minister at Beacon, is now a community inter-faith educator who designs and teaches courses on world religions. He will engage us in an exploration of Unitarian's third source of wisdom—that which comes from the world's religions that inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life. He will address the place of 'wisdom' in our lives, and explore two kinds of wisdom from the world's religions: universally abiding moral-spiritual principles, and historically progressing social-institutional guidelines.

- There will be a discussion of the sermon upstairs after the service.
- Violist Derek Darling will play.

### **DEC 13** Sometimes a Blue Christmas

*Rev. Debra Thorne*

As we approach the longest night of the year, we pause and touch the tender places of loss and hurt. The Blue Christmas Service is a time for acknowledging both personal pain and the suffering in the world, that we may make ready our hearts for the return of hope and love.

### **DEC 20** A Christmas Pageant

*Rev. Debra Thorne, Amber Strocel, L. Redmond and You!*

A mother and father seeking refuge have arrived at our doors. We welcome them in and make them comfortable. Then our neighbours arrive, including some shepherds, donkeys and a couple of angels—everyone wants to welcome the new babe. A star in the east has led wise ones to

### **DEC 24** Christmas Eve Stories

Thursday, Dec. 24 at 7 pm

*Rev. Debra Thorne*

There is a glass of mulled apple cider and some cookies waiting for you tonight. Come cozy up with Carol and Elf to hear a tale or two this Christmas Eve with your Beacon Family. We'll sing your favourite Christmas carols, and share stories both poignant and spiritual.

### **DEC 27** Stories that End Well

*Marilyn Médén and Friends*

On this Sunday—so close after Christmas, and the last Sunday of our theme, Story—we will listen to, read, and interpret stories that illustrate our principles, arrive from many sources, and end well. It will be a joyous, and yet serious; interactive, and yet personal; relaxing, and yet engaging time.



**Beacon  
Unitarian  
Church**

Sunday worship services and religious education classes are held at the Sapperton Pensioners Hall, 318 Keary Street, New Westminster. Services start at 10:30 am. More info at [www.beaconunitarian.org](http://www.beaconunitarian.org).

**Deadline for the January issue of The Beacon:** December 15th, 2015  
Please send to: [Newsletter@BeaconUnitarian.org](mailto:Newsletter@BeaconUnitarian.org)

## A Time for Love. A Time for Hope.



This December as the shops fill with gifts shouting to be bought, and the fliers spill over the door steps, and at the same time as the world reels from the madness of incomprehensible acts of violence, I ask you to pause. We need to all just stop for a moment or a day and drop our shoulders and soften

our breaths and take time to reintroduce ourselves to what really matters to us. Surely what matters to us is how we live from that which we hold most worthy.

I cannot tell you what that is for you. Only you know. Whatever you know to be your highest good, your deepest longing, your purest dream, your fullest ideal, surely now is the time to mark every one of your actions with it.

There is a lot to avoid on the television and social media. It can be an amplifier of fear and hatred and a platform for a lot of really stupid people. And like real life, one can come across stories of pure beauty, stories of radiant humanity. In the wake of the bombings last month I have been lifted up by the brilliant audacious courage of some of my fellow humans. Two true stories:

A young bearded man stood on a city street corner, eyes covered by a scarf, his arms wide open. At his feet he had

two signs. On one sign he had written. "I am a Muslim. I am labeled a terrorist." On the other sign he wrote; "I trust you. Do you trust me? Hug me." He stood there waiting, vulnerable and unseeing. What would you have done? Walk by? After a few tense moments, someone hugged him, then another person and another, male and female, young and old, every race walked into his embrace, and our hearts were made whole.

In the Paris subway, two days after the bombing, three friends stood together holding hands: one was Canadian, one was Syrian, one was French. The sign in front of them said, "Love over Fear. We cannot be separated". Their simple message was profoundly moving. In deciding to take this stand for love and friendship, they broke the spell of fear that had hung over Paris after 129 people had been killed. You can see their video here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=1LYPBwZdJ8U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=1LYPBwZdJ8U)

We are entering the season of love and hope, which is meaningless unless we too choose to take a stand for our ideals. May this be a season for love. May this be a season for hope.

May you and your families have the opportunity to strengthen the love in the world this December.

— Warmly, Rev. Debra Thorne



**T**he Beacon Religious Education program is taking orders for the 2016 issue of the Multifaith calendar. The Multifaith Calendar offers insight into the world's major faiths—a window that gives not only accurate information on each of the major holidays and festivals, but detailed historical information of these faiths and their relationship in time.

Beautiful and varied artwork, on the theme of "Gratitude", illumines each month.

Calendars sell for **\$15.95**, with \$6/calendar going towards the Refugee Sponsorship Project. To order, please speak to, or email Amber Stroccl or Laura Redmond (BeaconUnitarianRE@gmail.com) by December 6th. **Makes a beautiful Christmas gift.**

**The gift that gives twice... Order by Dec. 6th**



## Board Bitz

November was taken up by the Stewardship Drive, budgeting and tying up some loose ends.

The Stewardship Committee reported to us a very successful and inspiring pledge drive, which meant the Board had to make only small adjustments to committee requests for the year in order to arrive at a draft budget that is balanced. As a Board, we are inspired and ever so grateful for a congregation that is so generous. YOU ROCK!

The Congregational Meeting has been re-scheduled for December 6th, in order to allow those who wish to

attend the climate action march that will take place on November 29th in Vancouver. As a reminder, there will be a soup lunch on December 6th and the agenda items for the Congregational Meeting are:

1. Presentation and passing of a budget for 2016.
2. Presentation and passing of the Mission Statement.
3. Discussion and confirmation of Beacon intent to sponsor a refugee family.

As a quick note—we must have a quorum of members in order to pass the budget, so please plan to attend and enjoy some soup.



Audrey Taylor,  
Co-President



Terry McComas,  
Co-President

In the “loose ends” category, the Board adopted a policy on the use of Social Media, and we also adopted a procedure for use by our Social Action Committee and task groups (see below).

In closing: *We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.*

### Social Media Policy

Beacon Unitarian Church supports the use of social media (Facebook, Blogging, Twitter, etc). Social media may be used to promote Beacon Unitarian Church and/or to share information, ideas and/or opinions regarding Beacon. Members and congregants will adhere to the following guidelines:

1. *Permission in writing will be secured prior to posting on the internet or publicly, any pictures or videos in which anyone can be identified.*
  2. *All postings will be respectful and in alignment with Unitarian Principles.*
- Any inappropriate use of social media (harmful, illegal, bullying, harassing, or containing ethnic, racial, religious or sexual slurs) which may be associated with Beacon, will be dealt with by the Minister, a Religious Education Director or a member of the Board of Directors. At the discretion of the Beacon representative, the person doing the posting will be requested in writing to either remove the offending posting entirely, or to edit

the posting to include a statement that it does not represent Beacon Unitarian Church.

- Immediate attention will be given to social media which is likely to harm children, youth or the vulnerable elderly.
- Beacon pledges to respond to all parties respectfully, with sensitivity and confidentiality.
- All congregants and staff of Beacon will be informed of this policy annually, in September. Notification/information may be by newsletter and/or email tree and/or posting at church.

### Advocacy Letter Procedure

If any Beacon Social Justice task group/committee wishes to formulate an advocacy letter to be sent on behalf of Beacon, a draft of the letter will first come to the Board for approval. The resulting approved letter will be read to the congregation during a church service or a church event and be available for signatures after church or the event. All letters should be guided by our Unitarian principles.



**Beacon  
Unitarian  
Church**

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Coquitlam, BC V3J 0A3  
info@BeaconUnitarian.org  
www.beaconunitarian.org

#### Consulting Minister:

Rev. Debra Thorne  
minister@BeaconUnitarian.org

#### Lay Chaplain:

Marilyn Medén, 604-469-6797,  
m.j.meden@telus.net

#### Choir Director:

Charlene Dubrule, 604-464-3992,  
char4myc@shaw.ca

#### Board Executive:

Terry McComas, Audrey Taylor,  
Carol Woodworth

#### Trustees:

Rob Warner, Bev Lock

#### Connections & Membership:

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Renée Spakowsky 604-463-8086

#### Beacon Newsletter:

newsletter@BeaconUnitarian.org  
Production: Laura Redmond  
Proofreader: Franci Louann  
Distribution: Tom & Uta Poiker

From the Stewardship Committee

## Beacon's Vision Plan for 2016

Connecting and inspiring through transformative worship services	(46%)
Transforming the lives of children and youth	(17%)
Reaching out to the community with joy and justice	(26%)
Providing the foundation through administrative responsibility	(11%)
Total Budget for 2016:	\$94,620.04
Contribution from Pledges (approx. 90%)	\$85,000.00
Contributions from other sources (approx. 10%)	\$9,620.04

Together we have reached our pledge target of \$85,000. Your Stewardship Committee, together with the Board, worked hard to present the draft budget in such a way as to inspire our congregation. We also worked hard to transform our relationship to the Stewardship Drive. I say we succeeded. Well done to all of us. Thank you so much for your generosity and your commitment to Beacon.

For those of you who are curious about such things, 87% of our congregation

responded to the Stewardship Drive by making a financial pledge to Beacon for 2016 and several people pledged for the very first time. Our median pledge remained the same at \$600 and our average pledge dropped slightly by \$94. We received 66 pledges this year compared with 56 pledges last year. We have more people using PADs this year, more people turning in post-dated cheques, and more Transfers of Investments than we have had in previous years. This provides a

greater level of fiscal certainty to the Board and the work of our church.

On our Stewardship poster, all of the jars are filled—and we've added one more jar, in case there are those who still want to pledge.

You may be wondering what these numbers might mean about Beacon. I say they represent a clarity of understanding of the work that we do to transform people's lives. I say they represent the value and the importance that our congregants place on the work and the fellowship of our church. I say they indicate the power in our community which we can harvest together. And I say the numbers reflect the leadership of our minister and our lay leaders at Beacon as well.

May this be the launching of a new story in the life of Beacon Unitarian Church.

Your Stewardship Committee,

—Sue Sparlin (Chair), Carol Woodworth, Susan Tarras, Anne McLeod

## Let's Connect



By the time you read this newsletter the Circle dinners held November 21st will have happened. Six hosts each had 5–8

guests attending the potluck gathering in their homes. Over 40 of you attended to enjoy an evening of great food and conversation. More next month about their success. The next Circle Dinner will happen early in March so watch for more details in the new year.

The latest Getting To Know U gathering held at Bev Lock's home on October 24th was attended by 5 folk new to Beacon; David Kristjenson,

Deb Henry, Kira Thomsons, Joyce Gudaitis and Michael Jenkins. In a rich round of sharing we learned a little more about each others' discovery of Beacon. After a light lunch and a walk in the lovely park next to Bev's home, Rev. Debra, Joan Morris and Bev Lock shared bits of Unitarianism, Beacon's history and structure. It was a wonderful opportunity for more connections in Beacon's life.

The Connections and Membership Committee welcomes Joyce Gudaitis as a new member to the committee. You will see Joyce in a number of activities at church, from taking and counting the collection and assisting in the nursery, to making sure we have tea and coffee on Sunday morn-

ings. A new member to Beacon, she has jumped right in, volunteering, and we are so pleased to have her join the Connections and Membership committee.

Over the next month or so we will be following up on the *Let's Connect* forms you completed in October. In the meantime, if you are interested in volunteering for a committee or project get in touch with Susan Tarras (starras@telus.net) or Joan Morris (joanmorris@telus.net).

Your Connections and Membership Committee,

—Joan Morris, Jean Donaldson, Susan Tarras, Joyce Gudaitis, Rev. Debra Thorne

## What's going on in Religious Education Classes

### Bake Sale Success

A big thank you to all who supported the Bake/Craft Sale in October. Together we raised \$226.70, which will be matched, to result in a \$453.40 donation to the Refugee Sponsorship Fund.

### Curriculum

During October and November, *The Seekers*, our group of older children, explored the themes of Resilience and Integrity. The *Community of Children* focused on Jewish traditions for the month of October, and Islamic traditions for November. In December both classes will unite and turn their attention to our upcoming pageant from the Christian tradition. We invite you to take a supporting role

in the pageant—details to be given during the service the week before, Sunday, December 13th.

### New Teacher

From January to June, Casey Thorne Stainsby (Debra's eldest daughter) will be joining the RE program and leading *The Seekers*. Casey has been a DRE at the Lakeshore Unitarian Congregation in Quebec for the past few years. We extend a warm welcome to Casey and look forward to her skills and ideas.

### Calendar Fund Raiser

The RE program is selling the Multi-faith Calendar again this year. The calendar features beautiful and varied

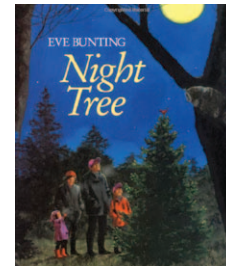
artwork on the theme of Gratitude. Contact Laura or Amber to order your copy—last day to order is December 6th. See the box on page 2.

### Classroom Assistants

We would like to extend our appreciation and thanks to the Beacon members who have assisted in the RE program this fall as a classroom assistant. We will be canvassing for volunteers for the new year on Sunday, January 10th after the service. Please consider signing up again, or the first time. Remember, no preparation is needed—we just need another adult to help supervise the children and join in the learning along with the kids.



Three *Seekers* in front of the yurt we are using as a classroom on a trial basis.



### Night Tree Party – Christmas gifts for our feathered and furry friends

"Night Tree" is a story by Eve Bunting that tells of a family's annual Christmas tradition of making edible ornaments for neighbourhood wildlife, and using them to decorate a tree in the forest. At our party, you can string cranberries and popcorn on thread, or add peanut butter and seeds to pinecones. Later we'll go outside and hang our ornaments on a tree, and sing carols in the moonlight.

**Date:** Saturday, December 5, 2015

**Time:** 5:30–8:00 pm

**Place:** Home of Peggy Lunderville  
(Close to Gaglardi exit on Hwy. 1)

**Phone:** 604-522-3001

**Bring:** Warm clothing, a flashlight and a contribution of food to eat & share.

**RSVP:** Laura Redmond (604-939-9310) or lauraredmond2@telus.net.



## Sponsoring a Refugee Family

**B**eacon is moving forward in its plans to sponsor a refugee family. Background research has been in process to determine the many aspects of this venture. Considerations are broad including the logistics of acquiring a family, the church's responsibilities, fundraising and settlement issues, among others.

The Beacon planning committee recommends that we sponsor a family of four from any of the countries that fall under the umbrella of concern for United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR). While Syrian refugees certainly do merit consideration, the Beacon Steering Committee felt refugees from other countries should not be overlooked.

Our commitment as a church would be to provide for "our family" for one year. Research indicates that we would need approximately \$50,000 in funds to do this, particularly as living in this general area is costly. The expectation is that the family would likely settle in New Westminster, Coquitlam, North Surrey or North Burnaby.

The amount of \$15,000 is the estimated fundraising goal for the church. The expectation is that we could look to the wider community for donations. A generous anonymous donor has agreed to match funds brought in by Beacon—up to \$20,000. In addition, the federal government will subsidize approximately half of the cost of sponsorship because we would be taking a "Blended Visa-Office Referred" family (BVOR). It has been decided that we would not go forward with the sponsorship plan until 80% of the funds are in place.


When we give the green light, a family could be here in less than six weeks! So we must be ready. The Beacon Sponsorship group is to be a Constituent Group under CUC (which is a Sponsorship Agreement Holder), a designation that allows us to cut through a lot of red tape. There are many settlement issues, including finding temporary housing for a family for a minimum of one month, but possibly as long as three months. At that point, it's expected that the family find housing that suits it with our

help. Settlement issues are wide ranging, including everything from house furnishings to schooling, medical attention to acculturation, and more.

There is a lot of work to be done. Experienced sponsors have suggested that a group of twenty people is necessary to successfully take on this commitment. The Refugee Sponsorship Group have been keeping a list of those who have stepped forward offering help. Nancy Rupert is the point person for Settlement plans and Susan Millar for fund-raising. Please let them know if you can offer help. The full group also consists of Terry McComas, Carol Woodworth, Lynne Rhead, and Rev. Debra Thorne (a non-voting member).

On Sunday, December 6th, the Committee will be providing a more detailed outline of the plans to Church Members. Prior to taking a vote of support from members, we will answer questions about this undertaking.

—Susan Millar



*Chalice Choir Advent Concert*

7:30 pm, Sunday, December 6, 2015  
Unitarian Church of Vancouver, Oak & 49<sup>th</sup>

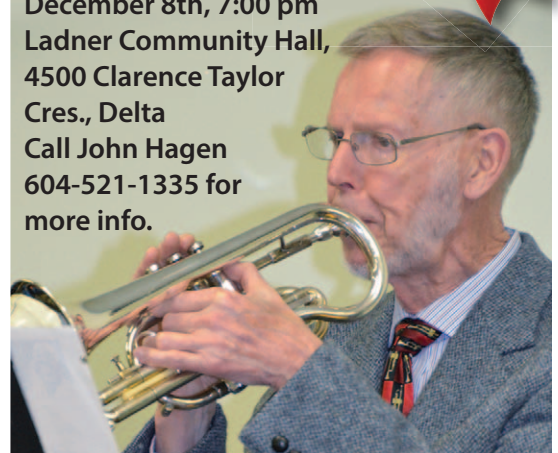
*featuring Dvorak's Mass in D*

Tickets: \$20, available at the door  
Reception to follow

Unitarian Arts and Crafts Fair,  
before and after the concert,  
6 pm until 10 pm

### Delta Band Christmas Concert

Tuesday,  
December 8th, 7:00 pm  
Ladner Community Hall,  
4500 Clarence Taylor  
Cres., Delta  
Call John Hagen  
604-521-1335 for  
more info.



**We invite you to explore these great ways to connect to the Beacon community and yourself!**

**Theology Pub**, to discuss relevant issues on religion and spirituality, in a relaxed pub atmosphere. See box below for details on our December gathering. Contact Franci Louann: flouann@telus.net.

**Soul Matters Groups**, delve into the monthly sermon themes—"Story" for December. Part personal sharing, part spiritual deepening, the groups meet once a month either at 1 pm Wednesday, or 7 pm Thursday. Contact Debra Thorne: minister@beaconunitarin.org.

**Join the Beacon Choir**, for musical fun and skill development. Rehearsals are every Tuesday at 7:30 pm, at Miller Park School in Coquitlam. Contact Charlene Dubrule, choir director, 604-464-3992 or char4myc@shaw.ca.

## **THEOLOGY PUB:**

### **Eat, Drink, Think.**

1 pm, Sunday, December 13th at Gino's Restaurant, 431 E. Columbia St. (a few blocks east of Keary St.) We've reserved the back part of the main room. It will seat 36-40 with room for scooters. Accessible, no stairs.

### **Topic: Stories That Inspire**

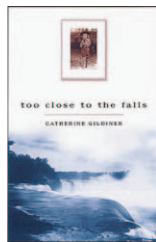
Religions are created through story—from Buddha's enlightenment under the Bodhi tree to Jesus' virgin birth. What stories inspire your life?

Co-hosts: Rev. Debra Thorne and Franci Louann

**NEW LOCATION**

**Humanist Discussion Group**, meets the last Sunday of the month at 7:30 pm at *The Astoria House* in Port Coquitlam to discuss a wide range of current topics. November meeting on the 29th. There will not be a meeting in December. Contact Marilyn Medén: m.j.meden@telus.net.

**Lunch Bunch**, meets every Thursday at noon. Bring your own lunch and share in a lively and topical conversation. Contact Sally Frith: salfrith44@gmail.com.



**Check out the Book Club**, which will meet Monday Dec 14, 11am-1pm. Contact Bev Lock: 604-525-6791 or lockbev@gmail.com. The book

for December is *Too Close to the Falls* by Catherine Gildiner.

**Beacon Men's Group**, Dec. 3rd, 7-9:30 pm. Contact Tyler Vittie at cycleman58@gmail.com.

**Attend a 'Getting to Know U' session**, to meet other newcomers and deepen your knowledge of how Beacon functions and what Unitarianism is. Contact Jean Donaldson for future dates: donaldsj@telus.net.

**Attend a Circle Dinner** and connect with other Beaconites in a relaxed setting. Next dinner will be in March. Contact Donna Hamilton: Donna-h@telus.net.

**Help out on Sunday mornings as a Coffee Host** (contact Sue Sparlin: sue.sparlin@shaw.ca), **or sign-up as a Sunday Morning Greeter** (contact Susan Tarras: starras@telus.net).

**Sunday, December 6th: Budget/Congregational Meeting, and soup lunch, after the service.**



## **Advent Wreath Social**

**Date:** Saturday, November 28th

**Time:** 5:30-8:00 pm

**Place:** Home of Peggy Lunderville

**Bring:** A contribution to the potluck dinner

**RSVP:** Peggy Lunderville, 604-522-3001 or prlunder@gmail.com

## **November 29: Global Climate Action March**

Starting at 1pm at the Vancouver Art Gallery, Beacon members will go down together on the SkyTrain after the service.



# Beacon Calendar: December 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<div>29</div> <div>10:30am - Choir sings</div> <div>10:30am - Worship Service</div> <div>1pm - Global Action March</div> <div>7:30pm - Humanist Group</div>	<div>30</div>	<div>1</div> <div>7:30pm - Choir Practice</div>	<div>2</div> <div>7pm - Build Your Own Theology</div>	<div>3</div> <div>12pm - Lunch Bunch</div> <div>7pm - Men's Group</div>	<div>4</div>	<div>5</div> <div>5:30pm - Night Tree Party</div>
<div>6</div> <div>Service Theme: Story</div> <div>10:30am - Food Bank Sunday</div> <div>10:30am - Worship Service</div> <div>12pm - Congregational / Budget</div>	<div>7</div>	<div>8</div> <div>1pm - Board Meeting</div> <div>7:30pm - Choir Practice</div>	<div>9</div> <div>7pm - Build Your Own Theology</div>	<div>10</div> <div>12pm - Lunch Bunch</div>	<div>11</div>	<div>12</div>
<div>13</div> <div>10:30am - Worship Service</div> <div>1pm - Theology Pub @ Gino's</div>	<div>14</div> <div>11am - Book Club</div>	<div>15</div> <div>Newsletter Deadline</div> <div>7:30pm - Choir Practice</div>	<div>16</div> <div>1pm - Soul Matters Wednesday</div> <div>7pm - Build Your Own Theology</div>	<div>17</div> <div>12pm - Lunch Bunch</div> <div>1pm - Connecting &amp; Membership</div> <div>7pm - Soul Matters Thursday</div>	<div>18</div>	<div>19</div>
<div>20</div> <div>10:30am - Choir sings</div> <div>10:30am - Pageant</div> <div>10:30am - Worship Service</div>	<div>21</div>	<div>22</div> <div>7:30pm - Choir Practice</div>	<div>23</div>	<div>24</div> <div>12pm - Lunch Bunch</div> <div>7pm - Christmas Eve Service</div>	<div>25</div>	<div>26</div>
<div>27</div> <div>10:30am - Worship Service</div>	<div>28</div>	<div>29</div>	<div>30</div>	<div>31</div> <div>12pm - Lunch Bunch</div>	<div>1</div>	<div>2</div>