

JANUARY SERVICE THEME:

We affirm and promote a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

Following are the tentative topics for our January on-line meetings, using the Zoom platform. Please check the website closer to the date in case any changes have been necessary. Services take place on Sunday at 10:30 am unless otherwise noted.

JAN 3 **In the Beginning**
Guest Speaker:
Rev. Samaya Oakley

Service Leader: Susan White

As we move into 2021, we take time to reflect on what it means to live in a time worthy of despair and how it is the price we pay for being awake and alive in this time. We'll explore creation stories and how they might guide us during these times.

The Rev. Samaya Oakley serves as the Minister for the South Fraser Unitarian Congregation. After attending the North Shore Unitarian Church, she quickly became active continentally through the Youth Office of the UUA. She also is a facilitator for all levels of the Our Whole Lives program. She became a part of the Canadian Unitarian Council's Truth, Healing and Reconciliation Reflection Guides—five age-appropriate reflection guides for use in Canadian UU congregations.

JAN 10 **What gives your life meaning?**
Rev. Meg Roberts

Starting a new calendar year inspires me to reflect on what gives my life

meaning. How will that be reflected in where I focus my energies this year? I would like you to consider: What gives your life meaning? What inspires you to get up in the morning? We'll have a chance to share and to connect these ideas in a creative way to the year that lies ahead.

JAN 17 **"Truth, and Wisdom, and Knowledge, Oh My!"**
Guest Speaker: Kira Tomsons
Service Leader: Janet Pivnick

In this service we will examine the ways in which philosophy can help us in our journey for knowledge and understanding of the world. Understanding the world in uncertain times can be difficult and brings challenges. Can we know what is true? We often say that everyone has a right to their opinion, but what does that actually mean? Come and explore the complexities of knowledge, truth and the meaning of wisdom.

JAN 24 **Where has your search for truth led you?**
Rev. Meg Roberts

People are drawn to a Unitarian

Universalist community because it allows people to share the truth as they understand it, and hear others' understanding of the truth. Where has your search for truth led you? What are the questions that you still seek answers for?

JAN 31 **Anti-racism Work as Spiritual Practice**
Guest Speaker:

Donovan Hayden

Service Coordinator: Nancy Rupert
Summer 2020 has been described as a moment of racial reckoning. Black people, along with allies, took to the streets to protest police brutality and anti-Black racism. However, with those months of intense activism behind us, those committed to social justice must ask "What do we do now?". It is easy to lose energy and purpose in the struggle against white supremacy. As Unitarians, committed to this struggle, it is important that we continue to engage and support anti-racism work through spiritual practice.



Donovan Hayden is a Black activist and artist. He is currently a MA student in Theatre & Performance Studies at York University in Toronto.

He spent the last year in Pittsburgh, PA, where he participated in the Black Lives Matter protests after the killing of George Floyd. Through his experiences, Donovan has had the opportunity to engage with Unitarians and anti-racism work on both sides of the border. He remains committed to using theatre and activism to achieve black liberation and dismantle white supremacy.

Musings by Meg

What sets Unitarian Universalist congregations apart from other faith traditions is the principle which is our **January theme**: *We affirm and promote a free and responsible search for truth and meaning*. It is what drew me to this movement. Other religions can affirm many of the principles that we affirm, but few could encourage and support me to find the truth as I understood it while drawing from such a variety of sources: world religions, science, philosophy, humanism, earth-based spiritual practices. I can honour the direct experiences of mystery and wonder that I have had in my life. I am encouraged to listen to the words and deeds of people who speak the truth to power, and work for justice with compassion and love.

It is in these challenging times, when we are so aware of the suffering and pain in the world, when finding meaning from these wisdom sources is crucial to help give us focus for our lives. What sources do you turn to as you try to make sense of the world?

I know that meaning-making is not done just in the head but also in the heart and spirit. It is about figuring out how to understand what is going on in our lives and in the world, and that is best done in community. It is when we hear others' stories and how they understand them that we get a sense of how we may understand our own. We recognize that the things we struggle with are connected to the struggles of others. We are not alone. We come to know the things we feel grateful for in our lives. Doing this in community also allows us to be responsible for what we believe and to be accountable for our words and actions. It is like a life lab—testing out our ideas within a compassionate community of other seekers of

the truth. What a gift this is! I look forward to sharing our stories and our understanding of truth in the coming year.

I wish you a year that brings insights into truth and an enriched understanding of what gives your life meaning. I wish you good health and heart-felt connections.

In the spirit of life,

—Rev. Meg Roberts

I know that meaning-making is not done just in the head but also in the heart and spirit. It is about figuring out how to understand what is going on in our lives and in the world, and that is best done in community.

How to reach me:

Because I'm working 1/2-time from home, here's how best to reach me:

- My regular Beacon days for meetings are Wednesdays and Thursdays. To support emotional connection and physical distancing, I'm available for appointments via Zoom or phone.
- On weekends when I lead Beacon's Sunday service, I also work Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays—focusing on service preparation those days as well as other work. I will respond to emails and phone calls on those days as well. (This month, that is Jan. 8–10 and Jan. 22–24.)
- Mondays and Tuesdays are my regular days off.
- I can be reached via email: minister@BeaconUnitarian.org and on my cell at 778-870-9015. I will

respond as soon as I'm able. If it's an emergency, please leave a message on my phone.

- **From Dec. 26—Jan. 5, I will**

be off work (for holidays and some time off in lieu for over-time worked earlier this year). If you need assistance during that time, please email Board@Beaconunitarian.org or if you would like pastoral care support, please email pastoralcare@Beaconunitarian.org.

I look forward to connecting with you.



Rev. Meg Roberts

*Connecting,
Inspiring,
Transforming!*

BEACON'S MISSION

Our mission is to celebrate the worth and dignity of all people and to live in conscious relationship with the earth.

For inspiration, we draw on the world's great scientists, artists, humanists and theologians, as well as on our personal experiences.

So we are inspired to create greater equality, greater justice and greater hope for our world.



**Beacon
Unitarian
Church**

Board Bitz

Welcome to 2021. Is that a light I see at the end of the tunnel? I think so.

December was magical. Besides all the wonderful Sunday Services, we held our annual whole-church holiday pageant. This year it was the classic, well-known story of Ebenezer Scrooge, a man whose heart was changed towards goodness in the course of one extraordinary night. It was an amazing performance. Another highlight was the Christmas eve service which was filled with inspiring stories and music of the season, where we all had a chance to reflect on what it means to connect and be in community. **Thank-you to Rev. Meg Roberts, Ashley Cole, the RE committee, and Worship Services for all their hard work in making this possible.**

After a successful pledge drive, we held our annual budget meeting on December 6th and passed a balanced budget for the new fiscal year. Thank-you to all who stayed after church that day to listen, ask questions, and practice our 5th principle. **A special thank-you to our treasurer Heather Brown for all her hard work in putting the 2021 budget together.**

Although we have budgeted for a return to 'in person' Sunday services in mid-March, things still remain a bit of a moving target, so this may not be able to happen. In anticipation of this, we approved a second motion at the budget meeting. In the event that we are unable to return to Sapperton Hall in March the funds that were budgeted for that purpose will be used to pay for three things. First to increase the minister's time from .5 FTE (full time equivalent) hours to .66 FTE hour in September and October. After that, if we are still not able to meet in person, those funds will be used to increase honorariums for more online special

guests and after that, to pay for upgrades to our online presence, as recommended in the *Beacon Unitarian Communications Assessment*

prepared by Rev. Christopher Wulf. Whatever this new year brings, Beacon will remain strong and vibrant.

From everyone on the Board, have a very Happy New Year. We are looking forward to being together again in 2021 to Connect with Compassion & Respect, Inspire Learning & Spiritual Growth, and Transform through Joy & Justice.

Happy new year everyone—sending a wish of good cheer to you and yours!

— David Kristjanson, President



David Kristjanson

Please Support the Share Food Bank!



John Hagen

During COVID, donations to the food bank need to be mailed to John Hagen for forwarding to Share, or mailed directly to *Share Family and Community Services* at number 104 - 3020 Lincoln Avenue Coquitlam BC, V3B 6B4. For further information their phone number is 604-540-9161. Thank you for supporting neighbours in our community through your donations to our local foodbank.

Thank you, John Hagen

Resource to Share Unitarianism

Former UCV minister Rev. Steven Epperson wanted an easier way to explain Unitarianism to others. The result was "What We Wish People Knew About Unitarian Universalism" which can be downloaded from: <https://cuc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/What-We-Wish-People-Knew-About-Unitarian-Universalism-v4.pdf>

Here's an excerpt: *We're an unusual, pluralistic faith community. This is one of the first things that attracted me to this religion; it has sustained me as a Unitarian Universalist over the years. I discovered, from my first encounter in Utah of all places(!), that a Unitarian Universalist congregation makes generous room for god-believers and atheists, for pagans, Buddhist-oriented meditators and wandering, non-ritualistic agnostics alike. Over the years, I have met with you at the doors of death and presided at your memorial services. Each time, whether you've believed in a life after death, or not, whether you were pagan or atheist, or whatever, you have affirmed for me the power of this religion as something unique and precious.*

—Rev. Steven Epperson



What We Wish People Knew About Unitarian Universalism



The ‘Enviro-bee’ returns & Plastics at the Grocery Store

Returning to a Beacon Sunday coffee hour near you: the ‘Enviro-bee’! In January, the Enviro-bee will happen in the break-out session of the coffee hour on JANUARY 17. It is a time when you can bring your environment questions, kudos and concerns—together we will come up with hints, ideas or support!

It ain’t simple... plastics at the grocery store, that is.

Reducing plastics in the grocery store is a serious challenge that will need a variety of solutions. Plastic has multiple roles: keeping food fresh & extending the shelf-life, reducing the weight for shipping, protecting from contamination and making it easier to stock the shelves. Grocery stores that are focusing on plastic reduction find that they need to make a range of adjustments, from using plastic

substitutes (usually plant based), through sourcing foods from local suppliers (to shorten the distribution time & distance), to replacing single

We know this will be a challenging transition—to wean ourselves off plastic—and it will only happen if we keep up the pressure on the food distribution system!

serving foods with bulk foods. One example (<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/04/plastic-free-supermarket-grocery-shopping/>) involves a method for selling tofu: “Eventually, she linked up with a manufacturer who will deliver

big blocks of tofu in a five-gallon bucket that they’ll pick up after it’s emptied and refill. So there’s still some plastic in the chain—but it’s far from single-use.”

Living with Less Plastic New West will be writing letters to the head offices of the major grocery stores to advocate for reduced plastics in the stores. Watch for your opportunity to e-sign the letters and perhaps send letters of your own. We know this will be a challenging transition—to wean ourselves off plastic—and it will only happen if we keep up the pressure on the food distribution system!



Teresa Morton

—Teresa Morton

Teresa.a.morton@gmail.com

or 778.855.1704

Children and Youth Religious Exploration (CYRE)

To start off, I would like to share my deep thanks and praise for all of those who participated in the various all-ages activities in December. Both the *Night Tree Party* and the holiday pageant were well attended, with plenty of ages having so much fun! A big round of thanks to Kate & Bill who led our night tree party sing along, and to the whole cast and crew who made our pageant such a success! Thanks to you all!!

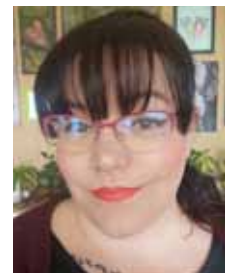
Also, as a quick update, the religious exploration committee sold nine multi-faith calendars resulting in a profit of \$54 that will be directed to our youth funds. Thanks to all who bought one! And many thanks to the fundraising coordination of Bette Goode, who made the calendar sales this year possible!

Looking ahead to next month, I am excited to announce that we would like to host a snail-mail (postal) version of *Mystery Buddies!* Starting Feb. 7th and running through



to Feb. 28th, Beaconites of all ages who have signed up to participate in this year’s *Mystery Buddies* program will send mail to each other once a week to exchange clues about their identity using a different theme each week. During the final week we will

host a short but fun Zoom social for everyone to meet each other and play a couple of activity blitz games. But in order to run this program we need your help! We need mystery buddies who are able to commit to mailing one small card or letter for four weeks and attend the short Zoom social. For more information on the program or to sign up, please email Ashley Cole.



Ashley Cole

Looking forward to connecting with you all in 2021!

—Ashley Cole (she/her pronouns),
Director of Religious Exploration,
dre@beaconunitarian.org

Beacon Programs

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

The Humanist Discussion Group (Online) likes to think about and discuss our common humanity, and our place as individuals and collectives in this dance of life. We are a group who welcome different points of view and discuss a wide range of ideas. We meet the last Sundays of the month at 7:30 pm, via Zoom. On Sunday, January 31st, Elizabeth Campbell will introduce *The Green New Deal*. What is meant by *The Green New Deal*? Will corporations decide our climate future? Or will it be people and communities? The Zoom link will be in the *Beacon This Week*.

If you are interested, but have not been receiving emails about the Humanist Group, please contact Marilyn Medén through the contact information in the Beacon directory.

Theology Pub (Online) shall continue to meet by Zoom, at 1 pm on the third Sundays of each month. Our themes will usually be connected to the service themes for the month. When *Beacon This Week* arrives, I'll send a reminder email to our people, along with something on topic that I hope you'll find inspirational. If anyone who is not on that list wishes to be there, please email me at theologypub@beaconunitarian.org.

—Your facilitator, Franci Louann
604-837-7613.

Book Club (Online) meets the 4th Thursday of each month at 7 pm. For Zoom details contact John Hagen, ajhagen@telus.net. **Thursday, Jan. 28:** *You Don't Have to Say You Love Me* by Sherman Alexie. Facilitator: David Kristjanson. See box on page 6 for more information.



Groove Dance for Beaconites

This past year, several Beaconites have been gathering on a weekly basis to... dance!! A good workout, a lot of fun, and a wonderful way to connect as a community, groove dance requires NO DANCE EXPERIENCE. Designed for 3–93 year olds of any fitness level, Groove is intended for everybody to explore their own way to move. With no difficult steps to learn, the focus is on enjoying the feeling of moving to music and being part of a joyful and accepting community. Here's what a couple of participants have said about their experience:

"Not only has Groove Dance loosened stiff muscles and increased flexibility, it has increased my enjoyment of music and I find myself spontaneously dancing around the house!"—Judy Villett

"Groove Dance is relaxing, flexible and enjoyable. Barely aware of doing them, I do moves that I know are part of more structured dances. This fits perfectly into my exercise plan."—Marilyn Medén

Please join us in the new year. Watch *Beacon This Week* for day and time. For information about Groove Dance, see the [three minute informational video](#) by its originator, Misty Tripoli—<https://www.bodygroove.com>. For information about Beacon's class, contact Janet Pivnick janpivnick@gmail.com.

Lunch Bunch (Online) meets every Tuesday at noon, year-round, currently via Zoom. Bring your lunch and share in lively and topical conversation. Contact Laura Ramsay at 604-816-5331 for the Zoom link.

Attend 'Getting to Know Beacon' (to learn more about our Sunday services and programs) or a **'Getting to Know You' session** (for conversation with our minister and Connecting

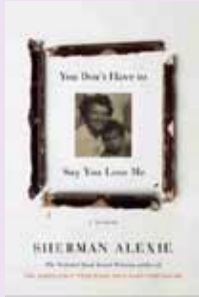
Committee, and to learn more about Unitarianism and ways to be part of this community). If you are interested in attending the next session of either, please contact Rev. Meg Roberts: minister@beaconunitarian.org or 778-870-9015.

The Beacon Choir has been temporarily suspended due to COVID-19. Please contact choirdirector@beaconunitarian.org for more information.



Beacon Book Club

Thurs. Jan. 28, 7 pm (Online)



You Don't Have to Say You Love Me

by Sherman Alexie, Little, Brown and Company, c.2017, 457pp.

Facilitator: David Kristjanson

Genres: Native American Literature, Literary Memoir, Autobiography

Awards: the author is the recipient of numerous awards

A searing, deeply moving memoir about family, love, loss, and forgiveness from the critically acclaimed, bestselling National Book Award-winning author of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. Family relationships are never simple. But Sherman Alexie's bond with his mother Lillian was more complex than most. When she passed away, the incongruities that defined his mother shook Sherman and his remembrance of her. Grappling with the haunting ghosts of the past in the wake of loss, he responded the only way he knew how: he wrote. The result is a stunning memoir filled with raw, angry, funny, profane, tender memories of a childhood few can imagine, much less survive. An unflinching and unforgettable remembrance. (Source: Wikipedia)

More info about the book club at: <http://beaconunitarian.org/index.php/book-club/>. For Zoom meeting details contact John Hagen, bookclub@beaconunitarian.org.

Soul Matters Sharing Circles

Led by Rev. Meg Roberts, the next session is planned for **Wednesday, January 6th** as we reflect on our Unitarian principle, "acceptance of one another and spiritual growth" (December's theme). We have two groups: 1:00–3:00 pm or 6:30–8:30 pm. If you would like to try it out, please contact Rev. Meg Roberts (minister@beaconunitarian.org, 778-870-9015) for Zoom access information. The participant info packet is available on Beacon's web site ([see resources link at top left](#)). You can join via computer/smart phone/tablet or via regular phone. All are welcome.

Beacon Film Club

Fridays, 7 pm (Online)

The film club continues, very successfully, with varied films and responses. The procedure is to view the film in advance, and then come to a Zoom meeting at 7 on Fridays to chat about it. The Zoom link is in Thursday's *Beacon This Week*.

The films selected are all available from YouTube for a rental fee (from free to \$6.99). They may also be available for streaming from other internet sources, so if you have a subscription to a streaming service, do check there first. To rent a film from YouTube, just search for the title in YouTube and look for the video that has a blue "Buy or Rent" box next to it.

Please connect with Marilyn Meden using the Beacon directory and let me know of any concerns.

Jan. 8, *Chocolat* [2000 located in France, with Johnny Depp], introduced by Marilyn Medén

Jan. 5, *Goldfinger*, introduced by John Hagen

Jan. 22, *Freida*, introduced by Donna Webb

Jan. 29, *Manchester By The Sea*, introduced by Franci Louann

Pastoral Support Team

Beacon's Pastoral Support Team encourages members and friends to reach out and let us know if you, or someone you know, has a specific need. For example: wanting emotional or physical support of some kind; illness at home or in hospital; in self-isolation and needing help with errands. Also, let us know if you would like us to drop off one of the Beacon Caring Quilts, so that you can wrap yourself in the compassion and care of this community. We can do our best to be of use in ways that meet recommendations around social contact from BC's Provincial Health Officer. —Rev. Meg Roberts (778-870-9015), *Laura Redmond and Judy Villett* pastoralcare@beaconunitarian.org



Book Launch!

Argentina poesía by Franci Louann

Congratulations to Franci Louann on the publication of her new book! Cover price is \$24.95. Special for Beaconites: \$25 mailed; \$20 pick up in New Westminster (email francilouann@gmail.com).

Reviews:

Franci Louann's *Argentina poesía* is a travel diary transformed by kaleidoscopic language. From the very first page, Argentina bursts into life in poems dripping with colours, fragrances, sensations. If you have not travelled to this vast country, these poems will take you there. The swirl of words, intense and provocative, is mitigated with peals of laughter, ironic reflections, and gentle affirmations. To be sure, Louann's Argentina, where theft and muggings are just around the corner, is not a perfect place. Yet joyous friendship, little kindnesses, good food and conversation, light up each poem. In Louann's trenchant poetic universe, living is not reasoned into place: it simply is.

—Robert Martens, poet, writer, editor;
little creatures, Hush, city of beasts (Ekstasis)

Franci Louann's book captures the unique and sensuous qualities of Argentina and its cities. It gives the reader the view of an outsider looking through eyes of love – personal and cultural – but clear-sighted about dark political histories and present complexities, and the difficulties gaining knowledge of how to live in a new land. In Louann's poetry, we hear the music, taste the wine, read the authors, and enjoy the artists and architects of this place, while we take up residence and wander its streets, grand and humble.

—Adrienne Drobnies, *Salt and Ashes* (Signature Editions)
Gwendolyn MacEwen Award

Franci Louann's love of Spanish and the locales in and around Buenos Aires raises this collection to the status of a "*palo borracho, a tree full of giant flowers.*" With leitmotifs of wine, street life, and relationships from a song that grows bilingually, *Argentina poesía* explores what makes up the patterns of our heartbeats. Rarely does a book so perfectly capture and express its author's growing worldview. By the end of the book, after we've read poems written in both English and Spanish, we see how it is that someone can write the script for their dreams and how "at the orchid store they are filling a taxi with flowers."

—Kevin Spent, author, poet, teacher;
Hearts Amok: a memoir in verse (Anvil Press)



Sample poem:

PALERMO, I LOVE THAT NAME, PALERMO

I remember a Sunday
with family, after pizza

Bosques de Palermo
the Palermo Woods

Lagos de Palermo
three lakes

the zoo
botanical and Japanese gardens

we have photos
against gnarled and

sprawling trees
the lungs of Buenos Aires

—Franci Louann, from *Argentina poesía*
Ekstasis Editions 2020



Virtual Gatherings c/o the CUC

Ceremonies at the End of Life
Saturday, January 16, 2021,

1st session: 9 am PT;

2nd session: 12 pm PT

This workshop is an enrichment Module for Lay Chaplains and will also be of interest to Ministers and Ministerial Students. It focuses on ceremonies related to Medical Assistance In Dying (MAid), family-led and home funerals, and online memorials. [More information](#)

Elder's Circle with Sharon Jinkerson-Brass

Wednesday, January 20, 2021,
4 pm PT (90 minutes)

Building on the Anishanawbe teachings of Oneness and changing with the seasons that she offered at the National Fall Gathering, Sharon will share more of her experiences and perspectives with an invitation for us to listen deeply, allowing them to transform, heal and expand our hearts. [More Information](#)

Leaders' Roundtable, Saturday, January 30, 9:00 a.m. PT

Congregational leaders are invited to gather monthly to share ideas and insights with each other and CUC staff. Our conversations will explore different topics with the goal of supporting our congregations and each other as we navigate the post-pandemic world with resiliency and grace. [More information](#)



[Gathered Here: Virtual young adult community](#)

The monthly online gathering for young adults (ages 18–35) will meet on Thursday, January 10th, 5 pm PT – <https://bit.ly/GHThursdays>. Together, we will find connection and create the opportunity to share what's on our hearts in a spiritually grounded and loving community.

[Connect and Deepen— Virtual Gathering](#) **2nd and 4th Sundays**

If you would like to deepen your spiritual exploration and form a connection with a welcoming small group, we invite you to attend *Connect and Deepen*. You can find more information about the group and its upcoming meetings by visiting the CUC website and following the CUC on Facebook.

"I was delighted to find another way to connect with others and share thoughts and experiences with them in an intimate setting. The themes and

format of each session are thoughtfully chosen and provide a way to consider our lives in a deeper way, if only for a few moments. I always look forward to our next time together." – Jos Sharp



**Beacon
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Church**

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Deadline for article

submissions is the 15th of the month, for inclusion in the following month's newsletter.