

FEBRUARY SERVICE

THEME:

We affirm justice, equity and compassion in human relations.



Following are the tentative topics for this month's on-line Zoom meetings. 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.

FEB 7 10 AM
**CUC National Service:
A Faith Worth Failing For**

Revs. Shana Lynngood and Samaya Oakley

We often talk about Unitarian Universalism as a transformational faith—and yet to be transformed means to take a risk. How is it that we are averse to taking such risks when it comes to widening the circle of who we are as a community? Join Revs. Shana Lynngood and Samaya Oakley for a service that explores how we've failed and how we can learn from those failures to become the transformational faith we proclaim to be. **Zoom link:** http://bit.ly/SOF_2021

The service will also be viewable on the [CUC YouTube channel](#).

FEB 14
A Love Worth Celebrating
Rev. Meg Roberts

Valentine's Day has long

been linked to a story of a Christian Saint who helped couples who were separated. The real history is much more interesting than that. Come hear stories of love of all kinds—with a romantic partner, between friends, within families, in nature. Then consider how you want to celebrate the nature of love in your life.

FEB 21
Beacon Birthday Service

Join your Worship Service Committee in taking a look back at the memories created by Beacon congregants of both the past and present, and in looking forward to what might lie ahead.

FEB 28
Equality Does Not Provide Equity

Rev. Meg Roberts

These days we hear on the news about systemic injustice. As Unitarians, we believe in promoting justice, equity

and compassion in human relations. To do that, we need to really understand what the difference is between equality and equity. When we do, we can find out what forms of equity are needed in our society now. This Sunday we'll have a new member ceremony, as well as take a special collection for the Canadian Unitarian Council's *Sharing Our Faith* fund.



Beacon Unitarian Church

Connect
with Compassion & Respect

Inspire
Learning & Spiritual Growth

Transform
through Joy & Justice

Musings by Meg

Our February theme is the Unitarian Universalist principle, “We covenant to affirm and promote justice, equity and compassion in human relations.”

I ran across a reflection on this principle from a colleague:

Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations points us toward something beyond inherent worth and dignity. It points us to the larger community. It gets at collective responsibility. It reminds us that treating people as human beings is not simply something we do one-on-one, but something that has systemic implications and can inform our entire cultural way of being.

Compassion is something that we can easily act on individually. We can demonstrate openness, give people respect, and treat people with kindness on our own. But we need one another to achieve equity and justice.

Justice, equity, and compassion are all part of the same package. Just as the second principle overlaps with the first, so it is related to our seventh principle—the interdependent web of all existence.
—Rev. Emily Gage, *Unity Temple, Chicago, IL* (read more from Emily in *The Seven Principles in Word and Worship*, ed. Ellen Brandenburg)

In this pandemic, at times when I have found my energy flagging, I find myself resisting paying attention to the needs of those in the larger community. Choosing to focus only on my own needs is part of the privilege I have from being from the dominant culture (white, Euro-Canadian, straight, middle class upbringing). I have a good place to live, a livelihood that is meaningful, good emotional

and spiritual support with access to healthcare and good food I can afford. I don't worry about being targeted because of the colour of my skin. Words like Emily's call me back to living the principles I believe in. With the pandemic pointing out the cracks in our society's justice system and the inequities in how Indigenous, black

Compassion is something that we can easily act on individually. But we need one another to achieve equity and justice.

and people of colour are treated, this principle is even more important. What areas of systemic inequity will I learn more about? What will I choose to focus my actions on?

I have appreciated, over six sessions, meeting with a group of Beaconites to learn more about anti-racism. From that learning comes a better understanding of the actions to take—I'm looking forward to sharing some of that learning and opportunities for action with you in an upcoming service or newsletter. I'm paying attention to how my actions impact the eco-system and am changing them bit by bit. I'm advocating to governments to take bolder action in response to our climate crisis, especially given what we've been learning during the pandemic about the impacts of human actions when we fly less, use our cars less, and when industry's output is lowered.

What are you focusing on these days? How do you want to bring compassion to the human relationships you are part of? How are you

living this principle in your life—whether in smaller actions or intentions or in larger ones? I look forward to hearing what you're learning and what actions you're taking.

In the spirit of life,

—Rev. Meg Roberts



Rev. Meg Roberts

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 Feb. 12–14 and Feb. 26–28.)
- 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 Jan. 30–Feb. 5** I will be on study leave, and from **Feb. 6–7** I'll be in a UU Ministers of Canada West online retreat. 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.

Board Bitz

We now enter the eleventh month of the pandemic. This pandemic has changed our Beacon community. We needed to reconcile our congregation needs with the policies from the BC and Canadian government. We are an involved and committed congregation. Members stepped up quickly to learn how to use the Zoom meeting program. Other members ensured that anyone who needed assistance with learning the Zoom program received help. Still others ensured that the phone tree was active and no one was forgotten.

Our social groups are very active. The movie group, the book group, the lunch bunch, the dance class, the Soul Matters groups and the Theology Pub are very busy. The Religious Explorations committee reaches out to our families. Our many committees are working hard. Without all the work that our people do on committees, especially helping with the Sunday services, we could not live up to our Mission: *Connect, Inspire, Transform*.

Effective this month, Beacon Board members will take turns writing the *Board Bitz*. Thank you David Kristjanson for penning many of the board updates.

The personnel committee is busy this time of the year; it is doing mid-year reviews with all of the Beacon contract workers.

The board is pleased to announce that, following Beacon's Congregational Sponsorship Policy and Procedure, and on behalf of Beacon Unitarian Church, we have approved sponsorship of Janet Pivnick as an aspirant for ministerial fellowship. A

support plan with learning opportunities within the congregation will be worked out each year between the minister, the board president and the aspirant. This agreement does not have financial implications for Beacon. We are excited for Janet and for Beacon!



Regina Ogmundson

We have begun planning for 2021/22. Over the next few months the Nominating Committee will approach Beacon congregants to determine who might be interested in joining the 2021/22 board. Perhaps this is

something you have really wanted to do? Please think about joining us.

In addition, please consider the charities in your neighbourhood—which local charity will you nominate for the *Sharing The Plate* program?

Enjoy February. Each day is minutes longer. There will be days of rain and sunshine. My routine in February is to carry my umbrella, wear my boots and jacket, and bring my sunglasses. There is light at the end of the tunnel. The COVID-19 vaccines are being distributed. March may bring early spring flowers. Beacon members will continue to connect, through Zoom, phone and on walks. Take care of yourself and each other. “No matter how mundane some action might appear, keep at it long enough and it becomes a contemplative, even meditative act.” —Haruki Murakami, in “What I Talk About When I Talk About Running”.

Regina Ogmundson
Member at Large

Which local charity will you nominate for the *Sharing The Plate* program?

Come A-Board!

There are spaces to fill on Beacon's board of Trustees. All kinds of talents are needed for a well-rounded board. Please talk to Carol Woodworth about becoming a member of the Beacon Board. You can learn how the Beacon community runs, and help keep it running. Bonus: Enjoy laughter and friendship too!



**Beacon
Unitarian
Church**

Sharing the Plate Program

Request for Nominations

It's time for us Beacon folk to begin focusing on the selection of our next sharing the plate recipient for the year 2021/22.

If you have a locally-based charity you would like to nominate please download the nomination form from [Beacon's web site](#).) Fill out the information required and email to jhagen1834@gmail.com or mail to J. Hagen 1834 London Street, New Westminster, BC V3M 3E3

The deadline for submissions is February 28th so that the *Sharing the Plate* committee can approve the nominees and circulate their profiles to the congregation. The recipient will be chosen by a democratic vote at the AGM in April.

—John Hagen, Committee Chair

Single Use Plastic – Letter-Writing Campaign



First of all, what are our objectives with our letter-writing campaign?

The objective is to lobby for much reduced **Single Use Plastic (SUP)** in the food distribution chain in Canada.

Why are we writing?

Our families and individuals tell us that there are limits to what they can do to reduce their consumption of SUP. The grocery store is the place where it is most difficult to avoid SUP (think of berries or dairy foods). Plastic pollution, overwhelmingly SUP, is a growing concern for our oceans, our natural places, plus the landfills. Plastic doesn't degrade in the environment, so it accumulates and poses serious health risks for animals, including humans.

Who are we writing to?

There are four major grocery suppliers in BC: **HYLouie** (IGA), **Jim Patison Group** (Save-On Foods, Price Smart, Choices, Buy Low), **Sobeys** (Safeway, Thrifty Foods) and **Loblaws** (Supervalu and No Frills)

What are our requests?

As suggested by Greenpeace:

1. Create a single-use plastic reduction policy and transition plan that includes social responsibility considerations.
2. Phase out single-use plastic packaging (e.g. plastic bags, products like plastic bottles, sachets, etc.).
3. Invest in reusable packaging and new delivery systems.
4. Extend Producer Responsibility—Take full responsibility (social and environmental) and demand the same of suppliers, for the entire lifecycle of the product and its packaging.

5. Increase transparency by measuring and reporting on plastic reduction and waste production and undergoing audits.

And our 3 specific suggestions:

1. A 'plastic free' aisle or area;
2. An end to the price incentive for produce packaged in plastic bags; and
3. The option of bringing our own containers for purchases in the bulk section.

How do we make this work in a virtual world?

You can send me an email asking me to add you as a signatory to our letters, or you can text me or call me.

—Teresa Morton

lessplasticnewwest@gmail.com

or 778.855.1704



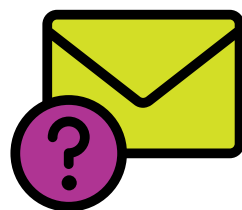
Teresa Morton

Children and Youth Religious Exploration (CYRE)

Happy February everyone! Is it just me or did January fly by? Even as we continue to meet virtually, we continue to recognize the vital contribution families make to a vibrant community. In an effort to provide ongoing Religious Exploration programming, the Religious Exploration committee launched a handful of program activities, some of which you can find on the Beacon website under the programs tab.

In February we are aiming to launch our first physically distanced version of Mystery Buddies, which is an all ages program in which children

and Beacon members are paired by me to exchange letters/mail using famous Unitarians as a pseudonym. The goal of the letters is to get to know each other and perhaps guess



Mystery Buddy Program

each other's identities. The program will run for the month of February, with participants exchanging mail once per week. In the beginning of March, depending on participant's

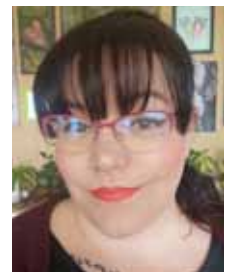
availability, we will come together on Zoom to reveal our identities and play a couple of rounds of fun get-to-know-you games. Please email me at dre@beaconunitarian.org if you have any questions or would like to participate.

Thanks everyone,

—Ashley Cole (she/her pronouns),

Director of Religious Exploration,

dre@beaconunitarian.org



Ashley Cole

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 that welcomes different points of view and discusses a wide range of ideas. We meet the last Sundays of the month at 7:30 pm, via Zoom. On Sunday, Feb. 28th, Al Sather will present *Self-domestication: Can we be good without god?* Self-domestication is the process of adaptation of wild animals to cohabiting with humans, without direct human selective breeding of the animals. Dogs and cats have undergone this kind of self-domestication. Most important to note, self-domestication also refers to the evolution of hominids, particularly humans and bonobos, toward collaborative, docile behaviour. (Source: Wikipedia, *Self-domestication*.) This presentation is a summary of Richard Wrangham's book, *The Goodness Paradox*. 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) continues to meet by Zoom on third Sundays at 1 pm—that's February 21st for this month. Members of our email list receive a little inspirational reminder (based on the current monthly service theme) just before our meetings. If you would like to join that list, contact me at theologypub@beaconunitarian.org.

—Franci Louann, Facilitator

Book Club (Online) meets the 4th Thursday of each month at 7 pm. For Zoom details contact John Hagen, ajhagen@telus.net. **Thursday, Feb. 25:** *Girl Woman Other* by Bernardino Evaristo. *Facilitator: John Hagen*. See box on page 6 for more information.

Film Club (Online) meets every Friday at 7 pm. See the box on page 6 for more information.

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.



Want to become a member of Beacon Unitarian Church?

We will be having a new member ceremony during the Sunday Feb. 28th online service. If you have attended a "Getting to Know You" session, talk to Meg by Feb. 15 about becoming a member of Beacon: Rev. Meg Roberts, minister@beaconunitarian.org, 778-870-9015.

If you've been a member of another Unitarian/Universalist congregation, you aren't required to attend that session, and instead talk to Meg about what being a member at Beacon means.

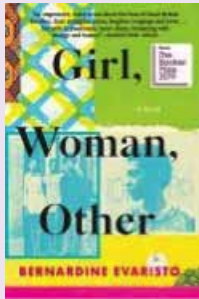
Groove Dance for Beaconites

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. 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.



Beacon Book Club

Thurs. Feb. 25, 7 pm (Online)



Girl, Woman, Other

by Bernardine Evaristo, Penguin, c. 2019, 452 pp.

Facilitator:

John Hagen

Bernardine

Evaristo is the winner of the 2019 Booker Prize and the first black woman to receive this highest literary honor in the English language. *Girl, Woman, Other* is a magnificent portrayal of the intersections of identity and a moving and hopeful story of an interconnected group of Black British women that paints a vivid portrait of the state of contemporary Britain and looks back to the legacy of Britain's colonial history in Africa and the Caribbean.

The twelve central characters of this multi-voiced novel lead vastly different lives—from a nonbinary social media influencer to a 93-year-old woman living on a farm in Northern England. These unforgettable characters also intersect in shared aspects of their identities, from age to race to sexuality to class.

Sparklingly witty, *Girl, Woman, Other* is a polyphonic and richly textured social novel that shows a side of Britain we rarely see, one that reminds us of all that connects us to our neighbors, even in times when we are encouraged to be split apart. (Source: NWPL)

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, during the next session we reflect on our Unitarian principle, “free and responsible search for truth and meaning” (January’s theme). If you would like to try it out, please contact Rev. Meg Roberts for Zoom access information (minister@beaconunitarian.org, 778-870-9015). 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.

- Wed. Jan. 27 – 6:30–8:30 pm (moved from Feb. 3) or
- Wed. Feb. 10 – 1:00–3:00 pm (moved from Feb. 3)

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 pm 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.

February 5: Sideways, introduced by Elizabeth Campbell

February 12: Planet of the Apes, introduced by Richard Hollins

February 19: The International, introduced by Jane Day

February 26: My Cousin Vinny, introduced by Susan Tarras

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](mailto:lauraredmond@beaconunitarian.org) and [Judy Villett](mailto:judyvillett@beaconunitarian.org) pastoralcare@beaconunitarian.org



Thank you Jean

Jean Donaldson passed on Monday, January 4, 2021. I'd like to take this opportunity to honour her and some of her contributions to Beacon and our wider community.

Peg Hinkley remembers how Jean's eyes would always sparkle when she saw a dog she knew, and she always had a treat for them. In 2011, Jean nominated PADS (Pacific Assistance Dogs Society) as a potential candidate for Beacon's *Sharing the Plate* program. As a result, PADS was the recipient of half of the congregation's undesignated contributions for 2012/13. The money was used to train a beautiful black Labrador called Merlot. Merlot is now working in Regina with police Sgt. Tia Froh in Child Services, where she is a canine intervention (trauma) dog. (For an update on the support that Merlot has provided go [here](#).)

Jean was an integral part of a special task force spearheading the development of an official vision and mission statement for Beacon. Audrey Taylor, also part of that group, remembers that they took their task very seriously, but made a decision very early on to inject humour into their work together. Hannah Brown remembers Jean helping to write some of the skits they performed, and being willing to have a laugh.

For several years, Jean was the chair of the Connections and Membership committee. The following letter was written by Joan Morris in June 2018, upon Jean's resignation. It reminds us of just some of Jean's gifts to our community.

*Dear Jean, June 2018
We already miss your warmly stalwart presence as our chair of the Connections and Membership committee. Your wisdom and many years of experience with the committee kept us on track for all the work of this important committee that connects our membership in so many ways. We have*



Jean singing with the choir for Rev. Thorne's ordination service (2013).

all appreciated your thorough, thoughtful and caring leadership.

You were always so aware of what was happening with members in the congregation, sharing your observations at

our monthly meetings. And you made sure we kept in mind the big picture work of the committee to ensure that newcomers and members were connected through engaging greeters, regular Getting To Know U gatherings for newcomers, membership joining ceremonies and up to date directories.

One of your many gifts was your warmhearted, genial welcome on Sunday mornings as you greeted visitors, engaging them in conversation. You always watched to make sure they were connected with others at our after church coffee hour and always had treats for our canine visitors.

We will miss your wise leadership and guiding light at our meetings, but will continue to look forward to connecting with you on Sunday mornings. —Joan Morris

While Jean's physical challenges increased over the past few years, she continued to contribute to Beacon as she was able. Even as recently as November 2020, she was proof-reading the newsletter—finding typos, making sure that sentences were complete, and ensuring that subjects were in agreement with their verbs. Thank you Jean, we will miss your wise leadership and guiding light.

—Laura Redmond (with photos by Jane Shoemaker)



Photo by Jane Shoemaker



Merlot, Tia Froh and Jean Donaldson (2015).



Virtual Gatherings c/o the CUC

Rising Together Creates Supportive Space for Young UUs of Colour

Saturday, Feb. 13, 1:30 pm

We are celebrating a new initiative by our young leaders to create a support community for Black, Indigenous youth and young adults of colour. The initial meeting happened in December and was led by Camellia Jahan-shahi, a youth advisor of colour at the Unitarian Church of Montreal. The goal for the group is to offer a chance for BIPOC Unitarian Universalists across Canada to meet and nurture a community with the aim of affirming each other and ensuring they have a confident voice in the broader UU community. The initial meeting was an unqualified success. Camellia says “To me our first session came with both a small sense of relief similar to what you feel when someone picks up the phone after you’ve been on hold so long you wonder if you’ve been forgotten, and the sense of excitement that comes with starting new adventures. I know for myself the impact was rewarding and heartwarming and I hope everyone in our group felt a similar way. I can’t wait for our next meeting and the projects ahead!”

The group will meet bi-monthly for themed worship, discussions, and workshop-style activities.

Beverly Horton a longtime UU and adult advisor to the group shared

her experience after the first meeting. “Having this means for youth and young adults from across Canada to be together, dream together, and work together is a wonderful COVID blessing. I very much look forward to seeing how this group evolves as a spiritually animated group with the potential to have a meaningful impact on the broader Canadian UU community.”

The next meeting of [Rising Together](#) will be Saturday, February 13, 2021. For more information or to register please contact Camellia at cjahanshahi@gmail.com or Casey at casey@cuc.ca

How to Have Difficult Conversations: A Keynote Address by Dr. David Wiley Campt Monday, Feb. 22, 4 pm

If 2020 taught us anything, it’s that facts don’t necessarily win arguments or change minds. In fact, it can be very difficult to change someone’s mind, including our own. So how can we, who aspire to be allies, address racism we see to effect real, meaningful change? Science suggests the best way is through relationships, connection and compassion.

Dr. David Wiley Campt has 25 years professional experience helping others develop skills and craft conversations to bring about a more inclusive, equitable society. The CUC

has invited David to offer a keynote and workshop series in February and March. David, author of the *White Ally Toolkit*, is sought after by organizations and corporations around the world. He will be sharing with us his R.A.C.E method which equips participants with the skills we need to have difficult conversations about racism that are transformative for all involved, and move the needle on issues we care most about.

Erin Horvath, our CUC Social Justice Lead, participated in David’s recent White Ally Bootcamp and said the experience was enlightening. “He teaches how to use our personal experiences to have conversations centered in vulnerability and storytelling versus anger or arguments. His tools have so many applications in my own life as I interact with people from all walks of life and discuss all sorts of issues, not only racism. His friendly and accessible way of approaching difficult conversations has certainly influenced the way I want to talk with people moving forward in my personal life and work. I think the program will be invaluable to those of us who want to learn practical skills to be allies and it’s an important piece of our own Reconciliation and Dismantling Racism work.”

Register now through our [Eventbrite](#) (early bird rate of \$27.54 up to Feb. 7th.) Please consider sharing this important event widely.



Beacon Unitarian Church

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Production: Laura Redmond
Proofreading: Kate Smith and Bill Marshall

Deadline for article

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