

Volume 44, Number 6
November/December 2026

Sunday Services—Inspiring Learning and Spiritual Growth

Each Sunday brings a rhythm of gathering, music, reflection, and connection. Here's what you can expect when you join us:

- 10:10 am: Approximately twice a month we have a pre-service sing-along and we invite you to sing or just listen. Our next sing-alongs are scheduled for Nov. 15th, Dec. 13th and 20th. On other Sundays you can socialize before the service—in person and online. At the hall, please help yourself to a tea or coffee.
- 10:30 am: Our service starts. In person, we meet at Sapperton Community Hall in New Westminster (318 Keary St.) and online using the Zoom platform. You can register for the Zoom link on our website homepage (on the righthand side of the page): beaconunitarian.org. The services are 60–70 minutes long. Each Sunday offers something a little different—sometimes thought-provoking and reflective, sometimes creative and hands-on. We invite you to join us for a few services and experience the full spectrum of what Beacon has to offer.
- After our service, we hope you can stay a while for connection and conversation (in person and online). Light refreshments are served in Sapperton hall.

We list upcoming service descriptions on the next page, on our website, and in our weekly e-newsletter, *Beacon This Week*.* If you're a newcomer, general Sunday service information is located in the second link of the footer menu on our website. Our services are designed for adults *and* we welcome all ages! If you would like us to follow up with you and get more information, you are invited to fill out the Beacon Connecting Form (on our website homepage).

*To receive *Beacon This Week*, our weekly e-newsletter, please visit our website (https://beaconunitarian.org/index.php/subscribe-to-newsletter) to be put on our emailing list.

We welcome your feedback and ideas for songs, discussion topics, and new elements in our services. You can also reach our worship team anytime at worship@beaconunitarian.org.

If you'd like to see past recordings from our services, they are linked from our website's homepage. Come and be part of our caring and questing community.

We look forward to connecting with you and getting to know you!

Pre-Service Sunday Sing-Alongs

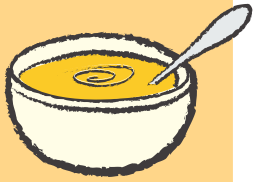


We get together to sing inspiring, uplifting songs before the Sunday service begins. Kate Smith & Bill Marshall will host the sing-alongs on Nov. 15th and December 20th. PLUS the 'Beacon Singers' lead on Dec. 13th. Be there at 10:10 to join in song!

Soup Lunch

Sunday, Nov. 15th and Sunday, Dec. 13th

Please join us after the Sunday service for lunch in the downstairs hall. Suggested donation is $5 or as you are able—free for newcomers! Last minute participants welcome. Anyone able and willing to bring soup, salads, buns and butter, or desserts please phone Augusta Hamilton, 1 (250) 741-7924.



Sunday Service Descriptions

NOVEMBER

NOV 1 **Holding the Tension**
Rev. Karen Fraser Gitlitz
What does it mean to be a mature Unitarian Universalist? One sign of spiritual maturity is the ability to hold both sides of a polarity. Join us as we explore some of the resources available to us on our journey as individuals and as a community.

We will also take time in this service to honour our beloved ancestors. If there is someone you would like to remember, bring a photo or memento to share.

NOV 8 **Subject to Change Without Notice**
Rev. Lynn Harrison
(A Meaning Making service)
Life calls us to adapt to countless changes, in our personal lives and in society as a whole. How do we respond to change, especially when change is unexpected or challenging? How can we practice ways of creating stability for ourselves and others in times of profound change?
Bio: Rev. Lynn Harrison is a Unitarian Universalist minister, performing songwriter, spiritual director and author. She currently provides regular guest-preaching and music for the Don Heights and Durham UU congregations. Lynn's music is included in the UU "Sing Out Love" hymnbook and shared on Substack and other platforms.

NOV 15 **A Place to Rest**
Rev. De Thorne
The outer world is awash with ever changing news, events and demands on our attention. It is near impossible to keep up with the sheer volume of it all as we are emotionally buffeted by the constant storming of our attention. We need refuge from the storm. A spacious and quiet place where we can reconnect to ourselves, where we can regather our energy. Let us find that place together, this place to rest.

NOV 22 **Finding Courage to Begin Again**
A Homily Club Service
Susan Millar and Augusta Hamilton will explore how we find the courage to begin again when life takes us in unexpected directions.

NOV 29 **Sunday Service**
Rev. Debra Faulk
Subject to be announced.

DECEMBER

DEC 6 **The Two Faces of Humility and Pride**
Rev. Stephen Atkinson
(A Meaning Making service)
One of the most beloved Unitarian principles is the third: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations. How do we comprehend, approach and enact "Acceptance," however? This service looks at two fundamental qualities that each of us individually, and together in our gatherings, need to understand and practice in our work towards acceptance: Humility and Pride. Pride, you ask? Both qualities have a helpful side and a potentially destructive one. Join us as we explore these two sides and consider how greater awareness of humility and pride can deepen our acceptance of one another.
Bio: The Rev. Stephen Atkinson is a second career minister now retired. Originally from Fredericton, he first became a medical doctor and practiced psychiatry in downtown Toronto. A personal crisis and profound spiritual experience led him from that into Unitarian Universalism and ministry. He served North Shore Unitarian Church in West Vancouver for eight years before moving back east to train in Spiritual Care at St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton. He has volunteered in a number of ways for the Hamilton church and is now serving as one of two Canadians on the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA. He lives in Milton, ON with his partner and his partner's husband.

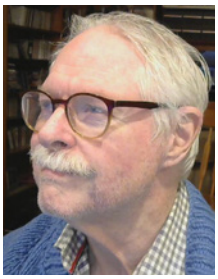
DEC 13 **Christmas as We Know It: Unitarian Contributions**
Rev. Debra Faulk
The current celebration of Christmas has an interesting history and Unitarians have made significant contributions in shaping some of the traditions. Come jingle a few bells as we take a somewhat historical romp from Arius to Dickens to Chalica, shared with pride and humility.

DEC 20 **Sunday Service**
Speaker: Reilly Yeo
Subject to be announced. Service followed by the final session of the 'Nature Grief, Nature Gratitude' series.

DEC 24 **Christmas Eve Service**
A reflective service featuring readings and Christmas music organized by the Homily Club.

DEC 27 **Pause.**
Beacon member Marilyn Meden with members of the Homily Club
Pause. Take a breath, enjoy an interior place, and deepen your inner peace. "Let it be," as the Beatles sang, and we will do just that. Let go of your "to do" list. Relax and renew in this quiet space we have between Christmas and the New Year.

Board Bitz



Richard Hollins
Treasurer

Our stretch of lovely autumn weather seems to be over! We all enjoyed our Thanksgiving Turkey Lunch. Many thanks to everyone who helped provide such a wonderful meal.

As the rainy season begins, we're looking forward to **An Evening with Shari Ulrich** on November 13th, a Beacon Unitarian music event in support of the New Westminster Hospice Society. We hope this will be the first of many such events!

We're also looking forward to the results of our Pledge Drive and to preparing a budget to present at December's Annual General Meeting. If you haven't already done so, please remember to submit your pledge form.

At a recent board meeting, several important questions about Beacon's future were discussed, and your input on November 8th, after the service, will help us find the answers:

- **How can we work most effectively with Tidal Pool over the coming year?** How can we best support Tidal Pool, and how can we ensure they understand what we need from them? How can Homily Club and other Beacon groups work with Tidal Pool to make both more effective?
- **How can we engage more volunteers?** We know that personal relationships grow when people work together, strengthening their connections to one another and their commitment to Beacon.

After the congregational feedback sessions (see page 4), we'll add your responses to the discussions already underway. This will help guide our planning with Tidal Pool for the coming year and inform our consultations with the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC). We hope to build stronger, more reciprocal relationships with CUC leadership and other member congregations.

So, keep warm and dry as autumn gives way to winter—and be sure to raise your voices at our pre-service sing-alongs!

—Richard Hollins, Treasurer



Building a tomorrow with courage. Join the journey.

Thank you for your generous 2027 pledge!

Sharing the Plate — Spirit of the Children Society, Youth Hub

We had a very successful visit from our *Sharing the Plate* recipient, Spirit of the Children Society, on September 20. Three guests attended in person (and stayed for the soup lunch), while another joined online. Several Beacon members also attended the Society's Reconciliation Day event at Queen's Park on September 30.

November is FEEDBACK MONTH!

Two important back-to-back opportunities:

SHARED MINISTRY: Tidal Pool Contributions

Sunday Nov. 8 after the service

Your input is crucial to help us plan for 2027. We (Beacon Board, Worship Team and Tidal Pool) want to know how you are feeling about Beacon life, and specifically the Tidal Pool contributions.

Join us following the service Sunday November 8. We will accommodate on-line and in-person participation. There won't be any other activities scheduled after the service (not even coffee-table discussions…). Coffee, tea & snacks will be available.

We will provide a summary of the Tidal Pool offerings in September and October and a form to capture your thoughts.

A Conversation with the CUC (Canadian Unitarian Council)

Monday, Nov. 9, 5–7 pm via Zoom

The CUC is in a time of transition. The new Executive Director, Michael Jodah, is asking for input from the Canadian congregations. Beacon will be meeting with them on Monday November 9.

The Beacon Board is hoping you will take this opportunity to meet with the CUC and ensure they hear your input regarding what Beacon needs, and where CUC support can make the greatest difference to Beacon.

This is an opportunity for your perspectives to be heard by the CUC, and help direct the CUC's future strategies. Please plan on being there!

Adult Religious Exploration (ARE)

We enjoyed Janet Pivnick's two sessions on *Loving Community* (September 29 & October 13). Janet offered new ways to be aware of our own state of body / mind in times of tension, plus techniques to stay present when community life is challenging. We found the information very useful, thank you Janet!

Nature Grief, Nature Gratitude is a small group ministry series with Reilly Yeo, co-founder of *My Climate Plan* and former Director of Communications and Public Engagement, David Suzuki Foundation. The series explores responses to the climate crisis at three levels: body, mind and spirit. Please see the Environment article below for meeting details.

Questions? Please connect with Teresa M. at are@beaconunitarian.org.

Environment: Enviro-bee & Reilly Yeo's *Nature Grief, Nature Gratitude*

November's Enviro-Bee is Sunday, November 1st! We'll gather after the service, allowing ten minutes for everyone to get coffee, tea, and a snack. The Enviro-Bee is open to both in-person and online participants. We'll share what's on our minds environmentally, celebrate positive climate news, and explore ways to find more of it!

There won't be an Enviro-Bee in December. However, please watch for the final two sessions in the *Nature Grief, Nature Gratitude* series, led by ministerial student Reilly Yeo. The third session will take place on Zoom on Tuesday, November 24, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. The final session will be held in person on December 20, following Reilly's service. We'll meet downstairs at Sapperton (series overview in Google Docs).

—Teresa Morton

Caregivers—You Are Not Alone.

The strain of caregiving for a family member or friend can leave you exhausted, anxious and isolated. Through its *Care for Caregivers* ZOOM series, Century House is offering five-week fall programs that give participants a weekly break from the demands of caregiving, all from the comfort of home.

With guidance from a professional facilitator, share experiences, learn from one another and guest speakers, access helpful information and resources, and have some fun. Assistance with navigating Zoom is available. Open to caregivers aged 50+.
A Zoom link will be emailed before each session.

Tuesdays, 1:30 – 2:30 pm (Zoom opens at 1:00 pm)

1. October 27, November 3, 10, 17, 24
2. December 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

Registration Fee: FREE. Please contact facilitator Peggy Hinkley for questions or registration: peggy.hinkley@gmail.com

Catch these BUMEs — *Beacon Unitarian Music Events!*

Coffee-House-Style Concert with Shari Ulrich

Friday, Nov. 13 · 7 pm · Sapperton Hall

Tickets are now on SALE! See beaconunitarian.org/music-event. Proceeds go to the New West Hospice Society.

Please SHARE with everyone you know!

Consider posting this file on your social media page or send it via email to friends, family, co-workers, fellow club members, associates, neighbours, and maybe even your hair-dresser...! *After clicking on the above link, right-click on the image and chose "Save image as" to download to your computer or choose "Copy image" and then paste into an email or post.*



Shari Ulrich's Biography

Originally a California girl, Shari Ulrich settled on the west coast of Canada in 1970, and soon launched her life in music. A singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist (violin, mandolin, piano, guitar, dulcimer, harmonica), she's been winning hearts across North America with her voice, sublime songs and on-stage charisma ever since. From her time with the legendary Pied Pumkin to The Hometown Band, and on as a solo artist, her career has resulted in 25 albums to date, including collaborations with Bill Henderson and Roy Forbes (UHF), Barney Bentall and Tom Taylor (BTU), The High Bar Gang, (a 7+piece bluegrass band with Barney Bentall and Colin Nairne) and The Luckies (with Hilary Grist Jeanne Tolmie). Along the way, she has garnered 2 JUNO awards and several Juno nominations, an induction into the BC Entertainment Hall of Fame, and a Canadian Folk Music Award for Songwriter of the Year.

Not surprisingly, Shari's daughter Julia Graff, also a multi-instrumentalist, began accompanying Shari on stage at the age of 12. Receiving a Master of Music in Sound Recording from McGill University, Julia is now a busy engineer, producer, and Emmy winning music editor in film and television. Among other projects, Julia engineered and co-produced Shari's last three albums with partner and fellow McGill grad, James Perrella.

Shari tours much of the year in a variety of configurations: from solo to a trio to a full band and though 2026 as a shared bill with the remarkable "Unfaithful Servants". Shari continues to perform with BTU, High Bar Gang and The Luckies with songwriters Hilary Grist & Jeanne Tolmie. She produces and hosts Vancouver's SongBird North series (since 1995) for the Songwriters Association of Canada.

An accomplished and dynamic performer, Shari makes any sized audience feel they are in her living room – drawn in by her insightful lyrics, and her engaging warmth and humour. Her songs delve with unique insight into the joys and challenges of the human condition, brilliantly reflecting the depth, range and caliber of this highly regarded Canadian artist.

Music Jams

2nd Thursdays of every month, 7–8:30 pm

Music jams are an opportunity to share a song, to play music together or just come along to sing with others. Watch for reminders in the 'Beacon This Week' emails. Jams begin at 7:00 pm and run until 8:30 pm. All are welcome! Music Jams are happening Nov. 12th and Dec. 10th in Coquitlam (Marylke's home).

Pre-service Sing-Alongs



We get together to sing inspiring, uplifting songs before the Sunday service begins. Please join us!

- November 15th and December 20th: Kate & Bill lead
- December 13th: Beacon Singers will lead

Beacon Programs

We invite you to explore these great ways to connect to the Beacon community and to 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. As a group we welcome different points of view and discuss a wide range of ideas. We meet the last Sunday of the month at 7:30 pm via Zoom.

Sunday Nov. 29, 7:30: We will meet to hear Earl Morris introduce *Update on Ending War: How AI has made ending war urgent. New ideas on how to end war.* We will be invited to put forward our ideas on how to end war and give feedback after hearing the ideas Earl has found.

If you would like to receive regular emails from the Humanist Group, please contact Marilyn Medén at humanist@beaconunitarian.org.

Book Club (in person) meets on fourth Fridays at 1 pm at John's place in New Westminster. Book selections appear in *Beacon This Week*. Please read the book ahead of time so we can dive right into discussion. See the box on page 7 for our current books. Newcomers and drop-ins are always welcome! For information email John at bookclub@beaconunitarian.org.

Lunch Bunch (online) meets every Tuesday from noon until 2 pm, 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 or check the *Beacon This Week* email. Newcomers are welcome!

Film Club (online and in person) meets 1st and 3rd Fridays at 7 pm via Zoom. Some in-person events are arranged from time to time. For more information see page 7 or email Marilyn Medén: filmclub@beaconunitarian.org. The Zoom link is in Thursday's email, *Beacon This Week*.

Beacon Men's Group

In our diverse community, we recognize that many men seek spaces to:

- Reflect on their personal journeys and spiritual growth.
- Navigate life's challenges in dialogue with others who understand.
- Explore topics such as relationships, identity, vulnerability, and purpose in an atmosphere of mutual respect and acceptance.
- Build meaningful friendships and a sense of community.

We meet every second week at 7:00 pm at various locations. If you're interested in joining or learning more about us, please email mensgroup@beaconunitarian.org.

Women's Groups offer friendship and conversation in several small groups that meet both in person and online at different times throughout the month. New participants are always welcome. To learn more or find a group that suits your schedule, please contact either Beth C., Cathy B., Elizabeth C., or Teresa M. (see the Breeze directory for contact information).



Food Bank collection is taken on the first Sunday of the month at Beacon.

In addition, donations can be made online (https://bcvfd.food-bank.bc.ca/participant/124/417/) Thank you for supporting our neighbours with your donations.

Homily Club Update!

This fall is presenting an excellent opportunity for Homily Club members. Between September 13 and December 20 Beacon is hosting ELEVEN ministerial (or ministerial student) presentations at our services! The Beacon–Tidal Pool partnership is bringing in three experienced ministers and one ministerial student. It is an extraordinary chance to learn about crafting a worship service (flow of the service, music integration, readings, presentation styles and sermon—or homily—construction and delivery).

At our October 25th meeting of the Homily Club, we worked on plans for services in November (8th & 22nd) and December (6th, 24th & 27th).

There will be a second Homily Club WORKSHOP after the November 29th service (in-person, downstairs). Watch for details in the BTW weekly email!



Film Club (via Zoom)

"A film doesn't really live until it is shared. When people come together to talk about what moved them, a solitary viewing turns into a collective human experience."
— Denis Villeneuve

How it works:
We meet on Zoom on the first and third Friday of each month at 7:00 pm.

View the film in advance, then come to the Zoom meeting to chat about it. The Zoom-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.

For more information, please connect with Marilyn Medén: film-club@beaconunitarian.org. The Zoom link is in Thursday's email, *Beacon This Week*. In addition to our Zoom meetings, we sometimes arrange in-person theatre events.



November 6: Queen of Chess
(*Netflix*, presented by John Hagen)
Follows the development of three sisters in Hungary into chess prodigies, especially the youngest who became the undisputed women's world champion and also went on to beat most of the top male players in the world.



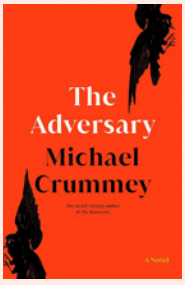
November 20: Penguin Bloom
(Netflix, presented by Janenne White).
Following a devastating accident, an Australian mother struggles with depression and the emotional strain on her family. Her path to recovery takes a turn when her family rescues "Penguin," an animal soul with a shared vulnerability.



December 4: Minari
(YouTube, presented by Pauline Atwood)
A Korean American family moves to an Arkansas farm in search of its own American dream. Amidst the challenges of this new life in the strange and rugged Ozarks, they discover the undeniable resilience of family and what really makes a home.

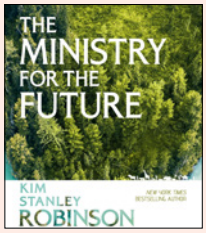
Beacon Book Club (in-person)

Friday, Nov. 27, 1 pm



The Adversary by Michael Crummey. Michael Crummey's writing has always been deeply rooted in Newfoundland and Labrador — and his latest novel *The Adversary* continues that tradition. The story centres on two rivals who represent the largest fishing operations on Newfoundland's northern outpost. When a wedding that would have secured Abe Strapp's hold on the shore falls apart it sets off a series of events that lead to year after year of violence and vendettas and a seemingly endless feud. It's a bit raw, but very well written, so a good read and definitely worthy of discussion.

Friday, Jan. 22, 1 pm



The Ministry of the Future by Kim Stanley Robinson. An unsettling masterpiece of the imagination, using fictional eyewitness accounts to tell the story of how climate change will impact us all.

The Ministry for the Future's setting is not a desolate, postapocalyptic world, but a future that is almost upon us. This extraordinary novel from visionary science fiction writer Kim Stanley Robinson will change the way you think about the climate crisis. —*Amazon.ca*

"The best science-fiction nonfiction novel I've ever read." —Jonathan Lethem, New York Times bestselling author of *The Fortress of Solitude*

Note: The book club will not meet in December. Book club meetings are in person in John Hagen's home. Please RSVP to medenmarilyn@gmail.com or phone 604 469 6797. Newcomers and drop-ins are always welcome!

The Lasting Impact of *Sharing the Plate*

Joan Morris recently contacted Michelle Marin at PADS (Pacific Assistance Dogs Society) to ask about Merlot, a black Labrador whom Beacon sponsored through our *Sharing the Plate* program around 2013.

Joan remembers attending Merlot's graduation with Jean Donaldson, who had nominated PADS as a recipient of Sharing the Plate: "I went to her graduation with Jean Donaldson who had submitted PADS as a candidate for the Sharing the Plate initiative. It was fun to see Merlot and a bunch of other 'grads' walk across the stage with their handlers to be acknowledged as 'ready to go' to their new jobs in the community."

Merlot went on to spend eight years working with the Regina Police Service, providing comfort and support to children and adults who had experienced abuse and other traumatic events. What a remarkable legacy!



Merlot, a black Labrador whom Beacon sponsored through our *Sharing the Plate* program. Photo by: Matt Olson / Saskatoon StarPhoenix /Saskatoon

Here is Michelle's reply to Joan:

Dear Joan,

Thank you so much for reaching out and for inquiring about our incredible Merlot.

You are correct. Merlot was placed with the Regina Child Advocacy Centre and worked alongside the Regina Police Service.

I am very sorry to share that Merlot passed away in 2025. If the Beacon Unitarian congregation would like to learn more about her remarkable legacy, I invite you to read or watch the memorial tributes you can access through the links below.

Michelle also shared an excerpt from the Leader-Post, published January 21, 2025, by Nykole King:

Police assistance dog Merlot has died at the age of 12 after a long career of bringing comfort to numerous victims and witnesses of traumatic events in Regina.

Merlot had been diagnosed by a veterinarian with an aggressive form of cancer in early January before passing away on Jan. 17.

The black Labrador spent eight years with the Regina Police Service (RPS) before retiring in 2023. She is fondly remembered for helping thousands of children and adults through difficult times while working at the Regina Children's Justice Centre, an integrated unit in which RPS, the health region and Crown prosecutor's office respond to reports of child abuse.

Learn more about Merlot's life and legacy:

- https://leaderpost.com/news/saskatchewan-news/remembering-merlot-regina-police-handler-says-emotional-farewell-to-former-service-dog-long-time-companion/
- https://www.sasktoday.ca/crime-cops-court/farewell-to-k9-merlot-reginas-police-facility-dog-10107028

Beacon Unitarian Church

www.beaconunitarian.org
info@beaconunitarian.org

Mailing Address: Box 414, 407– 552 Clarke Road, Coquitlam, BC V3J 0A3

Lay Chaplains: Janet Pivnick, Laura Redmond; ceremonies@beaconunitarian.org

Administrative Support: TBD

Board Executive:

President: Susan Tarras;

Treasurer: Richard Hollins;

Members at Large: David Kristjanson, Rob Warner, Corinne Cormier, Ken Viersen, Dominique Mamisao.

Connections and Membership: TBD

Beacon Newsletter: newsletter@beaconunitarian.org
Production: Laura Redmond

Proofreading: William Marshall and Catherine Smith.

Deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month preceding Sep. 1, Nov. 1, Jan. 1, Mar. 1, May 1, and July 1.