

Searching ✨ Learning ✨ Connecting ✨ Serving

Unitarian Church of Edmonton

uce.ca



The Edmonton Unitarian: December 2019, Vol 60.11

December 1

A Pioneer Christmas

Chorealis

On this first Sunday of Advent, we harken back to the days of yore. The Christmas holidays have come a long way from the early days of the Pioneers. Even though the Christmas tree wasn't loaded with gifts, the small log cabins were filled with love.

December 8

Christmas Tradition

Rev. Brian J. Kiely

I'm a fan of Christmas, and love the traditions. Looking back, I realize that even holiday tradition (for me) has changed, adapted, morphed, been rediscovered or dropped entirely. Perhaps tradition should be only what we make it.

December 15

Mitten Tree

Rev. Brian J. Kiely

Our annual service of pandemonious generosity is here! Come join us for this family service celebrating the holiday and culminating in the decorating of our Mitten Tree! Bring new socks, hats, scarves, mittens so we can decorate our tree and then help the less fortunate stay a bit warmer this winter. We also light a special traditional candle to welcome new children who have been born in the past year, within the congregation, and in your larger family circles. If you have never been, it's fun, silly and bright.

Followed by a Pancake Brunch UCE Youth Fundraiser.

December 22

Simple Gifts

Rev. Brian J. Kiely

No, this won't be a rant against gift shopping or exchanging. I'm sure you will have all finished your shopping by now anyway. :) Many years I visit the Catholic Basilica for midnight Mass. I arrive early and just sit in the church of my childhood, 'talk' to my late parents and reflect on my life. It's one of my private simple gifts of the season. (All ages)

December 23, 6:30 p.m.

Blue Christmas

Rev. Brian J. Kiely

For the 22nd year, we will offer a special service for those who struggle in the holiday season. Perhaps it's always hard for you, or maybe there is something in your life that makes this Christmas a little harder, a little lonelier, a little darker. Come into our safe space to acknowledge your feelings and stay afterwards for a simple shared supper of homemade soups, bread and pies.

December 24, 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve

Rev. Brian J. Kiely

A simple quiet and restful service amid the noisiness of Christmas season. Come and rest awhile, hear the stories, and sing the songs.

December 29

Readings and Reflections

Rev. Brian J. Kiely

Join us for a quiet and informal service. Bring a reading or a poem to share about the season, the year gone by or whatever is exciting you that day.

Ministerial Musings

In church last Sunday, someone asked me the meaning of the word Advent. It means the period before the coming or arrival of an important event. Liturgically it is a time of preparation best summed up in the word “anticipation”.

What a delicious concept in this world of instant gratification. Imagine having to wait for something. Remember in the old days when we had to just *wait* for things (other than medical care, of course!)

Once when I was six or seven I found my presents in the middle of December. Mom thought – wrongly – **that I wasn't a snoopy character**. For a few delicious secret moments I pawed through the bags hidden in the junk closet under the basement stairs expecting to be caught at any moment. I got away with it, of course, but the real punishment was far worse. Come Christmas morning there were no surprises under the tree, no excitement. I knew what was in most of the packages even before tearing away the paper. What a letdown! My searching had stolen away my own delicious anticipation.

I'm not always great at keeping promises I make to myself, but not looking for presents has been one I have held onto faithfully. You see, that year I realized that the best thing about Christmas gifts isn't the price tag, or whether it was on my list. **No, it's the anticipation.** Gifts should not be grabbed before their time.

Years ago one of my children had been to a craft fair the day before and apparently bought me a gift. As I tried to watch the something on TV, she danced around my chair teasing me about her gift, asking me to guess.

“Guess, Daddy!”

“Honey, I don't want to guess...I want to be surprised on Christmas Day. I am sure it's wonderful, but I want to dream about it a little bit first.”

“I know, but you can try to guess, because you'll never guess in a MILLION YEARS!!!”

...and so it went for several minutes.

I am reminded of guided meditations. Many of them use words to lead participants to places where they encounter a teacher of some kind. They receive a gift or an answer, something they need and have kept hidden inside. The thing is, the gift never comes until the receiver is prepared to receive it. These kinds of spiritual journeys are their own kinds of Advent.

In the days ahead, may you find time to prepare for a holiday season that brings you what you most need, whether it comes in a pretty package or in some other unimagined way.

See you in church!

Brian

Letter from the President

“I said ‘Somebody should do something about that.’ Then I realized I am somebody.”

~ Lily Tomlin

I want to thank all the “somebodies” who have been stepping up this fall. As we’re preparing for church life without a settled minister, board members (and many other “somebodies”) are realizing how many little jobs Brian has done or coordinated, how much “how it’s done” information is in his head or the heads of those no longer as active in the congregation, and how “the way we’ve always done it” might be due for a review.

Given this, the board is focusing on two areas this year: ensuring key processes in the church are up to date and documented, and reviewing how our committee structure and volunteering in general is working. If you have suggestions or would like to help, we’d love to hear from you! Catch us at coffee with the board on the fourth Sunday of each month, drop a note in the suggestion box outside the coat room, or phone, email, or talk to us person.

Things will definitely be different over the next few months, but I am reassured by the support and community that I see in every facet of UCE. I see it in the somebodies who made the Western Regional Gathering go off without a hitch, who created the beautiful mural in our front entry, who pulled together to host the holiday lunch for the retired and semi-retired, who are volunteering their time to organize our services from February to June, and who are sharing their know-how with newcomers to help them find their “fit” at UCE – just to name a few examples.

I have learned that this is a “can do” congregation, and one that is resourceful and creative. It is also kind and welcoming. As long as we have that going for us, we can face any changes with confidence.

Happy holidays, Karen Mills

UCE board members are: Karen Bilida (vice president), Doug Eastwell (treasurer), Gloria Krenbrenk (secretary), and trustees Robert Begg, Yvonne Mireau, Brandi Moller-Reid, and Kathy Stanley

Transitional Church Services Working Group

The Transitional Church Services Working Group is working to plan services between February and the end of June. Our next planning meeting is November 24th at 12:30 pm (after coffee with the board). All are welcome to attend. If you have ideas for upcoming services or guest speakers please contact Yvonne Mireau with the focus/topic of the service and your preferred date(s). You can contact Yvonne via email at shaktioya@yahoo.ca or leave a note in her mailbox at the church with your email or text contact.

Volunteers will be needed to fulfil different roles in the services including service leaders. John Pater and Corrine Jackson will be providing service leader training; please contact them if you are interested in becoming trained as a service leader. Audrey Brooks is willing to mentor new volunteers in their roles.

An Update from Religious Exploration

Hello everyone, thank you for all your support in the bake sale, concession stand and the Tea Advent Calendars. We are at an excellent start in our fundraising efforts. This month we will be talking a lot about change and renewal, as well as the importance of this time of year for many of the world religions in our Classes.

Important Religious Exploration Dates for November

- December 1st – Fifth Principle – part 1
- December 6th – FUNdraising Play with Concession Stand
- December 8th – Fifth Principle – **part 2, Also “Time with an Elder.”**
- December 14th – Youth Sleepover
- December 15th – Mitten Tree – All Ages Service
- December 15th – Pancake Brunch (CanUUdle Fundraising)
- December 22nd – Solstice
- December 22nd – Family Activity – Carols & Cocoa – right after service in Keller Hall
- December 29th – New Beginnings

CanUUdle Fundraising Projects:

Past

- Bake Sale – We had an excellent bake sale with some delicious baking, raising \$303.00
- Concession stand and Tea Advent Calendars – We had another great event raising \$454.30 as of Nov. 21st
- We would also like to acknowledge that we have had some additional donations in a total of \$180.

Thank you to all those that have contributed!

Upcoming

- Pancake Brunch – Will be on the 15th after the Mitten Tree Service
- Christmas Swags– The youth are hoping to make them for Christmas. Please talk to Brian if you are interested
- **Children’s Fun Day** – need to go Christmas shopping without the kids. Our youth will be organizing a day for you to drop off your kids and do your shopping. Date to be determined.



Thank you in advance for any support you can give.

Religion on Tap



Tuesday, December 10th. Religion on Tap will convene as usual at the Metro, 10250 - 106 Street at 7 p.m. These are informal gatherings where we socialize for a while and have a religiously themed discussion that runs from 5 minutes to an hour depending on interest. Brian Kiely leads and all are welcome.

HAPPY HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS FLIGHT

A comedy by David Haas

Friday December 6

Can a quirky little airline get an ailing granny and a TV celebrity psychologist safely home for the holidays when big airlines cancel flights in a Christmas Eve blizzard?

A FUNdraiser for UCE Youth Trip to Halifax May 2020 CanUUdle

Plus UCE Youth Group Run Concession Stand: Coffee, Tea, Desserts

Doors 6:30pm, Show 7:00pm

Tickets \$15 from Karen Mills at UCE or 780-432-0826

<https://www.facebook.com/events/507803046482218/>



Celebrate the season with Edmonton Vocal Minority and Chorealis on Monday, Dec 16th

“A Winter Wonderland” is a queer-friendly evening of music, activities, food, and good company hosted by community leader, Kristy Harcourt. Featured will be performances by both choirs, activities for the

audience and refreshments provided by the singers. An audience sing-along will the end the evening and help put everyone in a festive mood.

“Cash for carols” donations will go to local queer groups, and two raffle prizes will help support EVM.

Chorealis is the choir of the Unitarian Church of Edmonton and is conducted by Karen Mills and Gordon Ritchie. Paula Roberts and guest conductor Breck McHan will conduct EVM, accompanied by Daniel Belland.

Don your gay apparel and join us! <https://www.facebook.com/events/1004118846600202/>

Admission is free and children are welcome.

Chorealis Potluck

Come join the Chorealis Choir on Thursday December 19 at 6:30pm as we break bread together. Bring food to share. All are welcome!



🌹 Heart to Heart 🌹

- 🌹 Oksana Atwood and Mikey Mudry welcomed Frederick Atwood Mudry to the world on November 17th, 7 lbs, 13 oz.
- 🌹 Lilas Lysne is starting to recover after her 4 week bout of the flu
- 🌹 Janet and son, Simon were involved in a car accident on the evening of the 19th. No one was hurt (just sore) including the other driver. The Polkovsky minivan was written off.
- 🌹 Lauren Kay's father passed away suddenly on November 21st of a heart attack. We send our condolences and blessings for strength to Lauren and her family during this difficult time.
"Our mission is love, our race is humanity and our faith is in each other." Rev. Audrey Brooks
Remember that if you are experiencing loss, or would just like to chat about something, Email audbrook@telusplanet.net, or phone 780-489-8842 and ask for Chaplain Audrey

News from the Social Justice Working Group



During November, your Social Justice crew has been busy with a number of projects. Our Blanket Drive is underway, and about 20 blankets so far have been distributed to homeless folks at the SMILE Sidewalk Parties. We will continue to accept donations throughout November. Please leave your unneeded blankets and winter wear in the collection box in the lobby.

On November 17, a film about the devastating effects of ME, or Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, was aired following the service. This was a good opportunity for us to learn about this little-understood condition affecting more than one member of our congregation. Many thanks to Yvonne Mireau for spearheading this opportunity.

On November 19, we will be presenting a donation of \$942.25 to Welcome Home, a local organization which works to help recently-housed individuals settle into their new communities. Audrey Brooks will present the cheque to Rosemary Falconer and Claire Rolheiser during a conference for the homeless.

On Sunday December 8th, we will be observing the Write for Rights tradition in the lobby following the service. The stories of several individuals and issues identified as currently a human rights concern by Amnesty International will be made available. Your Social Justice advocates are asking you to read one or more stories and write your own letter of support for the issues that concern you most. Tools for letter-writing will be available.

Please go to <https://www.facebook.com/events/2523374217908988/> and share with your friends and family.



SPONSOR AN ARTIST



We were so honoured to have Martin Kerr sing during the Sunday service on November 10. Thank you to Michelle Van Der Molen for celebrating her birthday with us and donating funds to allow us to reimburse this wonderful local artist for sharing their talent with us. If you would like to sponsor an artist to celebrate a special day, in remembrance of someone or just for the joy of live music; please contact Karen Mills (karenmills@me.com) to discuss your options.

UCE'S FEATURED ARTIST - KAREN BISHOP



Born in Cheltenham, England and moved to Canada in 1992. Karen graduated from the U of A with a Fine Arts certificate in 2002. From 2011-2016 Karen was the co-owner of The Daffodil Gallery on 124 street but now enjoys the freedom of selling her art online and at art shows.



Karen's work is not intended to be faithful reproduction of the landscape before her, instead she paints by feel. You can especially see the emotion in the works that are

completed on location where the surroundings and the weather dictate the process. Karen's latest works are Watercolour on Yupo paper. Yupo is a sustainable, synthetic paper that allows her to move the pigments in a loose fluid style.

On Karen's website, you can order everything from large originals, to prints, cards, calendars, and more. KarenBishop.ca

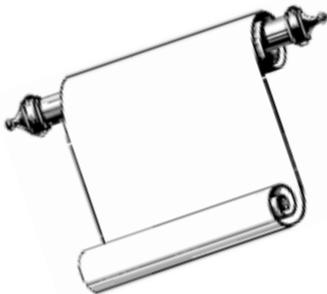


The Creative Writing Group

We had a successful initial meeting in November.

The next meeting will be in the UCE Library on Sunday, December 8 following service, approximately noon. The "prompt" that was suggested was to write a modern parallel to the Ancient Greek mythology. Alternatively, anything that your personal Muse inspires you to write. Or come whether or not you have something written. Be inspired.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me (Doug Eastwell) at Cell: (780)405-1221 or e-mail: eastwell@telus.net.



UCE Walking Group Schedule

December 6	Walkers' Christmas Lunch at Victoria Plaza
December 13	Christmas Bureau Carol Singalong at Winspear (free event)

Walkers carpool from church, leaving at 10:00 am, or meet at the walk site at 10:20 am. There are often changes to the schedule so if you are not on the email list please call Sheila, 780-454-7581 the day before to confirm the walk.

The Unitarian Church of Edmonton (UCE) is happy to be one of the sponsors of the Dragging Youth Series, an all ages drag show held at the church once a month.



Dee Luvs' Crowns for Kids Annual Dinner & Show On Saturday November 16 raised \$1444 and lots of new gifts for Ronald McDonald House & Kids Kottage!

The next Dragging Youth Show will December 14th at 6pm, cash donation at door of \$5 goes to youth charities



The Heart of Winter Solstice
Saturday, December 21 at 7pm
NEW LOCATION
SEESA
9350 82 Street
Treaty 6 Territory and Home of the Metis Nation

<https://www.facebook.com/events/975940869449642/>

Have You Seen the Food Bank Bin in the Church Lobby?



We are looking at doing a Food Bank decoupage project. Can you please save the labels from your canned foods for us to use?
You can leave the labels in the food bank bin.
Thank you!

All Non-perishable items are welcome but this month we are focusing on:

Canned Fruit, Vegetables, Beans, Pasta and Pasta Sauce
Menstrual Hygiene Products



Food Bank Distribution Signup Sheet

Volunteer shift is Wednesday evening 5:30 – 7:30 pm. Please come help, there will be somebody here that can show you what to do.

	Key Holder	Additional Volunteers
December 4	Marge Roche	
December 11	Scott Harrison	
December 18	Marge Roche	Stephen Greenhalgh, Gerard Hayduk
January 8	Marge Roche	

Sunday Service Volunteer Schedule

	Coffee	Greeting	Ushering	Piano	Sound Tech
December 1	John Turvey	Pauline Atwood, Donna Hamar	David Rae	Chorealis	Marg Booker
December 8	Maureen, Allison Day				Bill Lee
December 15	Clair Horne				Ruth Merriott
December 22	Clair Horne				Marg Booker
December 24					Kat Hartshorne
December 29	Clair Horne				Bill Lee

SHARING OUR ABUNDANCE



The Unitarian Church of Edmonton donates half of the loose cash collected each Sunday to a different charity, for the month of December UCE is donating to RISE (Reconciliation in Solidarity Edmonton).

RISE is a group of citizens in the Edmonton region committed to reconciliation in actions and words. Founded in 2015 in response to the one year anniversary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's National Event in Edmonton, RISE is made up of people from all walks of life committed to moving reconciliation forward in our community. They are committed to raising awareness of the lasting impacts of residential school, creating safe spaces for conversations about reconciliation, and offering opportunities to learn more about and engage with Indigenous culture.

Recordings of UCE Services



This church year, UCE began podcasting the audio of Sunday services on SoundCloud.com. Anyone using a podcast app can subscribe to our channel and receive new episodes as soon as they are published. To subscribe, open your app and search for *Unitarian Church of Edmonton* or for *UCE*. Once subscribed, you can stream any service or you can download it to your phone, tablet, or computer to listen without an internet connection.

If you don't wish to use a podcast app, you can stream the services directly from the SoundCloud host. Here are direct links to the October services and to the November services published prior to the Newsletter deadline.

Oct 6 *"The Journey of a Thousand Miles"* Chorealís, <https://bit.ly/2p4N7vd>

Oct 13 *"For All That Is Our Life"* Rev. Brian J. Kiely, <https://bit.ly/33ZL3nd>

Oct 20 *"Towards a Thriving Future"* Rev. Brian J. Kiely & Western Canadian Ministers (Western Regional Fall Gathering), <https://bit.ly/31CZV97>

Oct 27 *"The Future is Nigh!"* Rev. Brian J. Kiely, <https://bit.ly/366Tf6J>,

Nov 3 *"Finding Each Other"* Chorealís, <https://bit.ly/34A9XtT>

Nov 10 *"Find Yourself First"* Rev. Brian J. Kiely, <https://bit.ly/36ZpfKq>

Nov 17 *"Connection in a Social Media World"* Rev. Brian J. Kiely, <https://bit.ly/2QvrrDN>

Recordings of Other UCE Services

The home link of the SoundCloud channel is <https://soundcloud.com/user-189401827/>.

For services for church years 2018-2019 and previous, click this link to the playlists on YouTube. Each playlist covers a church year.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/EdmUnitarian/playlists?view=1&sort=dd&flow=grid>

Calendar of Church Events

Here are some upcoming dates in 2020 to mark in your calendar. Please watch upcoming newsletters and social media for details and any possible changes:

January 26	Celebrate with Brian! It is Brian's final service with us and let's party. Pot luck after the service. Bring food, your own plate and cutlery. Please contact Kathy Stanley for more information at kathystanley@shaw.ca .
March 14	Chorealis Cabaret
April 4	Membership Dinner
April 30 – May 1	Casino Fundraiser
May 3	UCE AGM

***Please remember that events can be added or changed.

You can keep up with us online

We would love to see more comments on our Facebook and Twitter posts –
please give it a try!



Facebook Group - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/41659071349/>
Facebook Page - <https://www.facebook.com/UnitarianChurch/>



Twitter - <https://twitter.com/UnitarianUCE>



Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/unitarianuce/>



YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/user/EdmUnitarian>



UCE website calendar - <https://www.uce.ca/calendar/>

CUC Events

Rethinking UU Governance, Saturday, December 7, 2019, 12:30 - 2:00 p.m. ET Many Canadian UU congregations struggle to find ways in which our very governance, style of organization, will reflect our values and resonate with the lives of those who engage within our communities. Join us for a conversation, beginning with two powerful stories and opening for all participants to share their ideas, experiments and questions. Our two presenters will be Mr. Sanford Osler, North Shore Unitarian Church and Rev. Jessica Rodela, Grand River Unitarian. Registration deadline: November 28. Cost: Free for individuals or groups



Coming Spring 2020, CanUUdle XX: Celebrate 20 years of CanUUdle! Chorus 2020: National Young Adult Conference CUC National Annual General Meeting

Hosted by the Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax May 15 – 17, 2020

CHALICA



Chalica is seven days long and runs from the first Monday in December through to Sunday (December 2-8, 2019)

Each day represents a different UU Principle: a

chalice is lit each day and actions, gifts, or volunteering that expresses the day's Principle are given and received. Here are some suggestions for you:



Monday: We light our chalice for the inherent worth and dignity of every person

- ✚ You can go through your closet and find new or lightly used items to donate
- ✚ Write a card thanking someone for being who they are



Tuesday: We light our chalice for justice, equity, and compassion in human relations

- ✚ Display your kindness to others.
- ✚ Look for volunteer opportunities, try joining the Social Justice Group and [Smile Edmonton](#) in feeding the homeless



Wednesday: We light our chalice for acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth

- ✚ Have a conversation with someone about their spiritual journey and their philosophies
- ✚ Explore your own faith and download the [UU Worship Web app](#); you can find lots of inspiration



Thursday: We light our chalice for a free and responsible search for truth and meaning

- ✚ Give yourself a gift of a book and expand your knowledge
- ✚ **Donate to the Edmonton Public Library to support everyone's right to knowledge**



Friday: We light our chalice for the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process in society at large

- ✚ Get informed and involved in your local political organizations
- ✚ Speak out when you see injustice, write letters to your MLA, MP, and local council



Saturday: We light our chalice for the goal of world peace, liberty and justice for all

- ✚ [Fold a Peace Crane and learn the story](#)
- ✚ Learn "[Meditation on Breathing](#)" from our hymnbook Singing the Journey, Hymn 1009



Sunday: We light our chalice for respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part

- ✚ **Join the UCE Social Justice Group in Write for Rights, Amnesty Intl's global letter-writing campaign on Sunday Dec 8th and write to show how we are all connected and when united we can change the world**
- ✚ Go on a family walk and pick up any litter you see

Plus there are some fun songs and crafts that you can find online. Here is a YouTube page with a few UU songs: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAQy6Biox2ZrswBvPmedW8Q>

The Unitarian Church of Edmonton is a liberal, multi-generational, religious community. We celebrate a rich mosaic of free-thinking, spiritually-questing individuals joined in common support and action. We welcome diversity including diversity of beliefs from divine believers to humanists, from pagans to atheists and agnostics. We believe in the compassion of the human heart, the warmth of community, the pursuit of justice and the search of meaning in our lives.

We gather with gratitude on traditional Cree lands that are now a part of Treaty Six and shared by many nations. A treaty is an inheritance, a responsibility and a relationship. May we be good neighbours to one another, good stewards to our planet and good ancestors to our children.

Holiday Office Closure: To Be Determined

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You do not have to be a member of the congregation to make a tax deductible contribution to UCE.

- ☞ You can donate online by Credit card through [Canada Helps](#) or [ATB Cares](#)
- ☞ Place your donation in the basket during a Sunday service
- ☞ Contact the office for other donation methods