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THE EDMONTON UNITARIAN

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN CHURCH OF EDMONTON

DECEMBER'S THEME: THE GIFT OF MYSTERY



December's Package

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Let mystery have its place in you...
leave a little fallow corner
in your heart ready for any seed
the winds may bring;
keep a place in your heart for
the unexpected guests,
an altar for an unknown God.

Henri-Frederic Ariel

Land Acknowledgement

In accordance with our principles, we acknowledge with gratitude that we gather on traditional Cree lands that are 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.



Sunday Services, 10:30 am

December 3 *Lessons and Carols*

Chorealis

As we head into the depths of winter and our longest nights, it is also the season of bright lights, crowds and cacophony. We'll reflect on two mysterious elements - silence and darkness. Both can plunge us into despair, yet we need both for perspective and balance.

December 10 *Creating Mystery: What is this Magic?*

with Rev. Morrison

In this service we will explore some of the rich traditions that help us turn our minds from the mundane to the mysterious. What is it that is important to you during this holiday season? What creates magic and mystery for you? Let's gather and create new magical moments together.

December 17 *Mitten Tree Service*

with Rev. Morrison

We continue our UCE tradition with this beloved yearly service. Come prepared to adorn our Mitten Tree with gifts of warmth for those that may be out in the cold. We will also take time to acknowledge all those new little ones that have come into our lives with our 'Baby Candle' ritual. Who know what other delights will be waiting for us? Come prepared to be touched, moved, and laugh!

December 19, 7 pm *Blue Christmas*

with Rev. Morrison

This quiet contemplative service is a time for us to gather and acknowledge that sometimes this time of year isn't always twinkly lights and gleeful moments. Sometimes, our hearts are breaking. Sometimes, we need to share our loss. Sometimes, we need to be still and feel all that is stirring in our hearts. This service will be in person only.

December 24, 10:30 AM *A Waiting World: The Gifts of Advent.*

with Gordon Ritchie

In this time of waiting, may we hold the world in our hearts. May we be thoughtful and introspective. May we delight in the darkness and all it teaches us. And on this fourth Sunday of Advent, may we rekindle the fires of hope, peace, joy and love within ourselves and our communities

December 24, 4:00 PM *Watch Party - The Spirit of Christmas*

An evening of lessons and carols to bring alive the spirit of Christmas. Speaker: Rev. Samaya Oakley; Service Leader: Sheila MacMaster. We will be joining with the Calgary Unitarians after we have our own opening, and will take time to share our own 'Silent Night' candles after we sign off. Bring goodies to share. Holiday beverages provided.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82157190777?pwd=RXhuaU2SFRJUGxBUGxRb3FwU2ptdz09>

December 31 *The Stories of 2023*

with John Pater

This service will be a looking back and remembering what transpired in our world in 2023. As we've done in years past, we will reflect on how the stories of our year - the news, cultural and personal stories we've encountered and lived - provide meaning for our lives.

If you would like to join us on Zoom from the comfort of your own home, please use this link:

**[https://zoom.us/j/97779453314?](https://zoom.us/j/97779453314?pwd=VVB1VWF5ZUd0UGU1ZXQ5UGVxb0tXQT09)
[pwd=VVB1VWF5ZUd0UGU1ZXQ5UGVxb0tXQT09](https://zoom.us/j/97779453314?pwd=VVB1VWF5ZUd0UGU1ZXQ5UGVxb0tXQT09)**

The Gift of Mystery



This time of year naturally beckons us to slow our step, gather our thoughts, and take time to nourish ourselves in the dwindling light. The waning light in the northern hemisphere asks all of nature to relax into forms of dormancy, yes, even humans too. At the same time, we have unreasonable expectations crashing into our natural tendency to slow down. We are asked to do more, be more, and, especially buy more.

What if we gave into our natural rhythms and discovered the magic that is in quiet, stillness, beauty, and respite? We too need some down time, some time to discover who we really are when we're not rushing around.

I love the low light this time of year, and especially all the twinkling lights that we bring out to remind ourselves that the light will be returning soon. I find magic in being cozy with a hot beverage and a beloved. There is so much folklore and stories in ancient cultures we can draw on to remind ourselves of how humans through the ages, managed the dwindling light and colder temperatures. What are some of the ways you manage the shortening daylight hours and the freezing weather?

Where do you find mystery and wonder? Is it skating in the park? Walking along Candy Cane Lane? Going to choral concerts? Strolling along the river? Inviting friends and family to share time and nourishment? My hope for you all is that you find something this holiday season that sparks a memory of the mystery of the dark, that you find joy with a loved one, that beauty and joy surround you, even if only for a moment.

I would like to wish each and every one of you and beautiful and restful holiday season. May the mystery of the season inspire you to be creative, to find connection, and may you find someone to be with that you care about and who cares for you.

In hope, peace, joy, and love,
Rev. Rosemary

FROM THE BOARD

- The board has approved a process to give our former minister, Rev. Brian Kiely, the title of minister emeritus. This honorary title marks a retired minister's long service to a particular congregation. The proposal will go to the congregation for a vote after people have a chance to discuss it. The vote will probably be at the Annual General Meeting in early May.



- The board is trying to raise its profile. To that end, here's a picture of our president, Brandie Moller-Reid.
- Dorothy Keeler, an active member of our congregation for 62 years, turns 90 in March. Her family is planning a birthday party at the church, and UCE will be a full partner in the event. This special woman deserves a celebration.
- The 2024 list of charities in our Sharing Our Abundance program has a new organization: the Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society. This wonderful organization helps indigenous residents of Edmonton in many ways – cultural programs, helping people find and maintain employment, support for families, and housing. They will receive money from cash in the collection plate during the month of October. Susan Ruttan, board secretary

Come all ye festooners,
deckers, adorners,
trimmers and tossers! The
UCE will be decorating the
Mitten Tree with scarves,
socks, hats and mittens.
These will be given to the
Boyle Street Community
Services for distribution to
those who really need
them.

Mitten
Tree
Service



December 17,
10:30 am

END OF YEAR DONATIONS

Year-end is coming. To make sure you receive your tax receipt for 2023 please have your donations to the church before the end of December. If you donate to the collection plate then our last in-person service this year will be on December 31st. If you donate by cheque then please make sure your donation is received before the office closes on Friday December 29th or put it in the collection plate on Sunday the 31st. Of course, you can donate online up until the 31st of December through Canada Helps or by Interac transfer to chadmin@uce.ca. Thank you to everyone whose donations support the work of our church.

Thanks!

Andrew Mills

andrew@misc.ca

780-918-3288

SANCTUARY CHAIR UPDATE!

Did you know that the wooden chairs in our sanctuary are 55 years old?

It is time to start looking for replacements. We are looking for a team of 2 or 3 people to investigate suitable replacement chairs for our church. The task will be to research what kinds of chairs are available, arrange for samples, and to present your findings at the AGM. If approved, chairs would be purchased over the next 2 to 3 years. Contact Andrew at andrew@misc.ca if you are interested in this project.



SOCIAL JUSTICE

To be able to marvel at the face of our neighbor with the same awe we have for the mountain top, the sunlight refracting. This manner of vision is what will keep us from destroying each other.

Cole Arthur Riley

Joint Event of the Ignite Change Global Convention


Join us at the
15TH ANNUAL GENOCIDE Memorial

**December 8, 2023
7:00 PM**

Shiloh Baptist Church
10727 114 Street NW
Edmonton

sponsored by:

Edmonton Jewish Centre
JOHN HUMPHREY CENTRE for PEACE and HUMAN RIGHTS
SCMR
Edmonton Centre for Multicultural Roots



WRITE FOR RIGHTS

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



2023 Write for Rights! – UCE in Action

What difference can one person make?

Well, when one letter is multiplied by letters, emails, posts & tweets by people around the world, it can get results.

Here are recent examples of what has been achieved by Amnesty International's world-wide campaign "Write for Rights":

- in 2022, it helped acquit 3 wrongfully-accused women in Zimbabwe in 2021,
- it helped release an Indigenous environmental activist in Guatemala.

Sit down with us (in person) Sunday, December 10 (Human Rights Day), right after the church service for the UCE informal writing bee.

All you need will be supplied--- paper, pens, envelopes, background information and sample letters, plus helpful volunteers to answer your questions and inspire you.

This year Amnesty International has picked 11 situations (various countries, various issues) which are the most likely to benefit NOW from letter-writing. There's bound to be one(s) that speak to you.

For more info and a sneak peek at the 11 "cases" <https://amnesty.ca/write-for-rights/>



SHARING OUR ABUNDANCE



For the month of December our Sharing the Plate recipient will be closer to home.

The Minister's Discretionary Fund is a fund that the minister can use to provide confidential assistance to those facing emergency financial need. From time to time the office of the minister is approached to assist someone that may have immediate food, safety, or shelter needs. This fund is where those emergency monies are taken from. This is a direct way to have a positive impact on the lives of congregants and community members. With gratitude, this fund was created last December and has been accessed several times by those in need.

Thank you for your generosity and kind hearts,

Rev. Rosemary Morrison

Interfaith Calendars on Sale



Click on the image to order directly from the Edmonton Interfaith Website or contact Audrey Brooks as church to get your copy (audbrook@telusplanet.net)!



To download December's theme package for small group /sharing circles, please click [here](#)

*You're
Invited!*

For several years many of us have met on Sunday's after church at Albert's Restaurant, 10604-124 Street. Anywhere from 6-18 enjoy having brunch together. Feel free to join us any Sunday after the service coffee and fellowship!

CARING CONNECTIONS IS FOR YOU



UCE's Caring Connections Project is way for us to help each other out. All members and friends of UCE may access Caring Connections when you need it.

- Are you laid up in a recliner with your leg in a cast? We can deliver meals.
- Do you need a ride to church occasionally? Someone can drive you.
- Are you bored to tears in a seniors residence with no car and mobility issues? We can send visitors.

If you need help or you know someone who does, contact your Caring Connections Dispatcher Gloria Krenbrenk at 780-668-9166 or ucecares@uce.com. Let us know if someone should receive a caring card in the mail from their UCE friends.

We need volunteer helpers:

- Nourisher – prepare a soup or meal for delivery
- Transporter – give rides or deliver a meal prepared by a Nourisher
- Visitor – Visit as a friend with someone who can't get out much
- Handihelps – simple repairs or advice on home, garden, auto or technology
- Special Offers – something unique to you than can benefit others

To sign up, contact your Caring Connections Dispatcher Gloria Krenbrenk at 780-668-9166 or ucecares@uce.com. Many thanks to those who have already stepped up.

You are never required to respond to a request. All Transporters, for example, will receive an email request and those who can help will respond, then the Dispatcher matches the request with a Caring Connector.

Confidentiality is maintained at all times, except with mutual agreement of the Receiver and Caring Connector. The Minister is informed of all Caring Connections activities.

Any questions contact Gloria 780-668-9166 or ucecares@uce.com.



CANDIAN UNITARIAN COUNCIL

Gathered Here

Friday, December 8, 2023 | 12:00 p.m. MT

<https://cuc.ca/events/gathered-here-december-2023/1702044000/1702049400/>

Let's talk about the young adult age range (and beyond)! (Currently Involved YAs)

Thursday, December 12, 2023 | 6:00 p.m. MT

<https://cuc.ca/events/young-adult-age-range-talk/1702411200/1702414800/>

Connect and Deepen: Winter Dreaming

Sunday, December 17, 2023 | 2:00 pm MT

<https://cuc.ca/events/connect-and-deepen-dec/1702828800/1702834200/>

Shaping Our CommUUnity



Vision:

We open doors to all seekers of spiritual growth and nurture positive change for a just and healthy world.

Mission:

UCE Mission is to inspire social justice by questioning the status quo, engaging community and inviting all to the table.

We do this by providing an intentionally inclusive home to:

- nurture spiritual growth and transformation
- foster learning opportunities and outreach experiences
- welcome all age groups
- support action for social justice
- be guided by the principles and sources of Unitarian Universalism

UCE Covenant of Right Relations:

With love as our guide, we pledge to create a beloved community of peace and compassion. We trust our ability to work through conflict. As members and friends of UCE, we agree to:

- Honour and respect diversity in values and beliefs as a source of communal strength
- Be truthful, kind and open minded
- Assume good intent and goodwill
- Listen with open hearts and speak with care even when it is uncomfortable
- Talk to, not about, others
- Accept responsibility for our individual acts
- Address conflict promptly and ask for help when conflict is too difficult
- Be steadfast in support of our community in times of disagreement
- Share the ministry of the congregation through our gifts of time, talent and money
- Express encouragement and appreciation for the gifts of others

The Principles and Sources of our Religious Faith

UU congregations affirm and promote eight principles, which we hold as strong values and moral guides. As Rev. Barbara Wells ten Hove explains, “The principles are not dogma or doctrine, but rather a guide for those of us who choose to join and participate in UU religious communities.”

Our Eight Principles

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.
- Individual and communal action that accountably dismantles racism and systemic barriers to full inclusion in ourselves and our institutions

We live out these principles within a “living tradition” of wisdom and spirituality, drawn from such diverse sources as science, poetry, scripture, and personal experience.

Our Six Sources

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic people which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world’s religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God’s love by loving our neighbours as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;
- Spiritual teachings of Earth-centred traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.
- Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As free congregations we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.

Please enjoy watching recordings of our Sunday Services again on YouTube or listen as a Podcast on SoundCloud. Just click on the link and don't forget to subscribe while you are there.

Join us in conversation on Social Media

- Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/41659071349/>
- Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/UnitarianChurch/>
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmpm5DXHKM7pRnnzcC75txQ>
- SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/user-189401827>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/UnitarianUCE>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/unitarianuce/>

Please make sure that you continue to update your Zoom account. Zoom regularly updates to release new features and fix bugs. We recommend upgrading to the latest version once it is available. How to update Zoom: <https://support.zoom.us>

Listen Everywhere



We have installed the Listen Everywhere service to replace our aging FM radios. This system will be in use for every service and available everywhere in the Church building and some of the parking lot.

To use the system, you will need to download and install the Listen Everywhere app from the google store, or apple store and you will need to connect to the UCE WIFI (password posted in church). Once you have done both steps, just open the app and start the session. It allows you to listen using your own headset, wireless earbuds, or if your phone is connected to your hearing aids, you will hear it there. Just as if you are listening to a phone call.

We will have people around to help if you need it, please ask.



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**Church Office Summer Hours:
Tuesday to Friday, 9 am to 2 pm**

People Finder

UCE Board: board@uce.ca

President: Brandie Moller

Vice President: vacant

Treasurer, Finance Committee Chair: Andrew Mills andrew@misc.ca

Secretary: Susan Ruttan

Trustees: Marilyn Gaa, Lynn Wolff, Gerard Hayduk, and Zoe Larson

Minister: Reverend Rosemary Morrison minister@uce.ca

Church Office: Janet Polkovsky chadmin@uce.ca

Head Teller: David Rae

Chorealis Choir: Gordon Ritchie, Karen Mills

Church Services: Gordon Ritchie

Lay Chaplain: Marilyn Gaa

Building and Grounds: Alan Boyle

DECEMBER 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3 Chorealis: Lessons and Carols Service 10:30 am	4	5	6	7 Chorealis Rehearsal 7:30 pm	8 Genocide Memorial 7:00 pm	9
10 Sunday Service 10:30 am	11	12	13	14 Chorealis Rehearsal 7:30 pm	15	16
17 Mitten Service 10:30 am	18	19 Blue Christmas Service 7:00 pm	20	21 Westwood Solstice Service 7:00 pm Chorealis Rehearsal 7:30 pm	22	23
24 Sunday Service 10:30 am	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 The Stories of 2023 10:30 am	CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED					