

VOL. 65 ISSUE 11 • DECEMBER 2024

THE EDMONTON UNITARIAN

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN CHURCH OF EDMONTON

LIVING LOVE THROUGH THE PRACTICE OF PRESENCE



[December's Package:
click here](#)

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Stop measuring days
by degree of
productivity and
start experiencing
them by degree
of presence.

Alan Watts



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

Dec 1

A Dickens Christmas

Chorealis

Join Chorealis for their annual Service of Carols and Lessons which will feature excerpts from A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens, read by Coralie Cairns and John Sproule. Published in 1843, it recounts the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, an elderly miser who is visited by the ghost of his former business partner and three spirits. Hear a tale of kindness, generosity, compassion, and transformation.

Dec 8

Presence, Not Presents; Or, What Would Buddha Do?

Rev. Morrison

In all the hustle and bustle of the season, sometimes we forget that there is more than preparing for the holidays. On this day, we will slow down, be present, and allow ourselves to resist the headlong rush of a to-do list. Let's take a moment on this day, Buddha's birthday, to remind ourselves that we are human beings, not human doings.

Dec 15

Oh Mitten Tree: How Warm and Lovely You Are

Rev. Morrison

This is a service you will not want to miss! This amazing service will include our age old tradition of decorating our tree with warm items to give away. Not only that, the baby candle will be lit, a world premier of a new Gordon Ritchie composition in honour of a new baby born into our midst, and lots of carol singing! Our treasured UCE traditions live on!

Dec 17, 7 pm

Blue Christmas

Rev. Morrison

Sometimes things aren't so merry and bright, and we need to take a moment to honour those feelings. This candlelight service will be in-person only. There will be a time for sharing as well as readings and music to help us process and cope with this holiday season. Please plan to stay afterward for refreshments including homemade soups and pies.

Dec 22

A Very UU Christmas: How the Unitarians Saved Christmas

Rev. Morrison

Did you know that it was the Unitarians that brought Christmas back to life in the 19th century? Let's take a stroll down memory lane and learn about how Christmas celebrations had all but disappeared before the Unitarians sprung into action!

Dec 24, 7 pm

The Magic of a Child's Christmas

Rev. Morrison

This very special candlelight service will be a treat for your eyes, ears, and heart. We are excited to present Richard Thomas reading excerpts from Dylan Thomas' classic, "A Child's Christmas in Wales." There will be a wealth of warm holiday greetings and feelings, along with our yearly tradition of filling our sanctuary with candle light and Silent Night. We will finish off our warm magical Christmas Eve time with warm and delicious refreshments.

Dec 29

To Be Determined



We look forward to seeing you all on Zoom from the comfort of your own environs. 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)



December's Ministerial Reflections



It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old, from
angels bending near the earth,
to touch their harps of gold:
'Peace on the earth to all good
will, from heaven the news we
bring.' The world in solemn
stillness lay to hear the angels
sing.

Edmund Hamilton Sears (1810-1876)

Did you know that E. Hamilton Sears was a Unitarian minister? This carol was written by Sears while he was recovering from a mental health crisis. His omission of any mention of the birth of Jesus brought much scorn from his more orthodox contemporaries. Still, it has now become one of North America's most beloved seasonal carols. I found out all this information from the Unitarian Universalist Advent calendar. This colourful calendar was created by Rev. Ralph Yeager Roberts. For every day in December leading up to the magical 25th day of December, Rev. Roberts has illustrated a fact about how a Unitarian or Universalist, (or both) has contributed to the traditions or history of the Christmas season. This calendar was created in 2015 and I encourage you to go to the website and print out the pdf for your enjoyment this Advent season. Here is the page with all the information you will need:

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/image/uu-advent-calendar>

If you are interested in learning more about how Unitarian Universalists have influenced the holiday traditions, you are invited to the Sunday Service on December 22nd, 'How the Unitarians Saved Christmas.' There, you will be quite surprised about the huge contribution Unitarians have made to this celebration!

As we move through this sometimes magical and sometimes stressful season, may you find joy in unexpected places.

As we wait for the return of the sun, may the gifts of the holiday season warm your heart and fill your spirit.

In peace,
Rev. Rosemary



Ministry Roundtable

We are so blessed to have so many gifted volunteers giving so generously of their time and energy to keep UCE the strong, beloved community it is! Our building is bustling, our community thriving.

I had to begin this message on that high note because of how uplifted I am following the Ministry Roundtable on November 24. UCE is a “shared ministry.” Ministry at its core means service, which we all perform in various ways and at different times as UCE congregants.

The Ministry Roundtable brought together 11 leaders of committees and task teams to share their roles, goals and ideas with each other. Many at the Roundtable do double or even triple duty (or more) on teams other than those they represented on November 24. We had stimulating and productive conversations, which I know they would be happy to share with the other team members and anyone else interested.

Along with Rev. Rosemary and I, attendees were:

Maida Zederayko – Membership Committee chair

Carol Hutchings – Pastoral Care Team co-chair; Right Relations Team

Larry Charach – Human Resources Committee chair

Karen Mills – Chorealis co-leader; Worship, Art and Music Team; Governance Advisory Team

Louise Charach – Governance Advisory Team chair; Right Relations Team chair; Communications and Marketing Team chair

Ruth Merriott – Endowment Committee chair; Finance Committee; Production team

Andrew Mills – Finance Committee chair (as Board treasurer); Canvass lead; Building and Grounds team lead; Production team lead

Susan Ruttan – Rentals Committee chair; Board secretary

Gordon Ritchie – Chorealis co-leader; Worship, Art and Music team co-leader

Currently, 14 committees and teams with some 40 volunteer members contribute to UCE’s vitality. And many more informal volunteer groups, not named here, contribute to the life of the church. If you are interested in learning more, I’m sure these key leaders would be happy to talk to you about their plans. Rev. Rosemary and I are also pleased to put you in touch with someone for more information.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I’d like to wish you a blessed holiday season. May the gifts of family, friends and your UCE community bring you joy and peace.

Lynne



Working Together to Nurture Healthy Relations at UCE

Thank you to all who participated in the consultation sessions around our three new Healthy Relations policies, approved by the Board October, 2024.

The policies are: Safe and Caring Conditions, Conflict Resolution and Destructive Behavior.

The Governance Advisory Team-Karen Mills, Lynne Turvey, Brandie Moller-Reid, and Louise Charach carefully reviewed your feedback. We clarified several definitions and added some where there were questions. You'll also note we revised the title of one policy (Safe and Caring Conditions) to better reflect the purpose and content. The decision was made to not combine the policies in order to keep the notions of conflict (which can be healthy) and destructive behavior (negative and unhealthy) distinct.

These new policies will be regularly highlighted in our newsletter for your reference and key aspects of these policies will be communicated on a regular basis as they become a part of our everyday life.

The Right Relations Team (Lynn Wolff, Carol Hutchings, Andrea Graham, Louise Charach) have met to thoroughly review their role to help build and maintain healthy and respectful relationships within our church family. Please contact us anytime with questions, thoughts, ideas.

Thank you once again for your ideas and feedback to make these important policies clearer and relevant to UCE.



Church Business

UCE: Right Relations Team Membership



Louise Charach

I joined the Right Relations Team because I believe in the strength of our UCE community and am committed to helping us grow a culture that is both strong and caring.

I retired in 2007 as Executive Director of the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC). My career also included fulfilling roles in television and film writing and within the Alberta justice system. I've enjoyed serving on the Boards of YESS, Child and Family Services, Regional Health Council Advisory, and Friends of the Royal Alberta Museum. Currently, I am part of the UCE Governance Team and the new Communications and Marketing Team.

Outside of these roles, I enjoy yoga, traveling, reading, and taking orders from Bella, my Ragdoll cat.



Lynn Wolff

I'm on the Right Relations Team because I find conflict both challenging and fascinating, and I believe I can contribute meaningfully with my experience and skills.

In my career, I worked as a clinical psychologist, specializing in relationship and couples therapy. Since retiring a year and a half ago, I've been dedicated to making a difference in other ways, including sharing my home with Ukrainian refugees for the past two years.

On a personal note, I have an incredibly strong bond with my dog who I love more than seems sensible! I'm also a bit of a klutz and have a notoriously poor sense of direction, although my moral compass tends to be spot-on



Church Business

UCE: Right Relations Team Membership



Carol Hutchings

Being part of the Right Relations Team aligns perfectly with my passion for promoting healthy relationships between people and within communities. My background is in social work, and I've spent much of my career working in and around the criminal justice field—whether in prisons, as a program evaluator, or as an instructor.

Restorative justice has always been close to my heart, and I'm excited to contribute to this important work.

Outside of work, I adore my grandkids—they're the absolute best! My husband and kids aren't too bad either.



Andrea Graham

I joined the Right Relations Team to give back to the UCE community that has been such a meaningful part of my life in recent years. This role aligns well with my professional background in human resources at the University of Alberta.

Currently, I serve as an executive assistant in the Human Resources, Health, Safety & Environment department at U of A, and I have previously worked with Alberta Health Services and MacEwan University.

In my spare time, I lead a jazz and blues band, The Andrea Graham Quartet, and sing with Chorealis. I'm also lucky to have two perfectly spoiled cats and a wonderful circle of friends.



Mitten Tree Service, Dec. 16th

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.



YOU ASK, WE LISTEN!



You can help us improve communication at UCE by filling out a quick survey after services in December. We will have questionnaires at the back and there will be on line option too.

There are cookie rewards for each completed survey!
Louise Charach, Communications and Marketing Team

2024 Write for Rights! – Dec 8 (right after the service)

The power of words can make a difference! On Dec. 8, starting at 10 AM and continuing after the service, join our UCE Writing Bee in honor of Human Rights Day (Dec. 10). Explore Amnesty International's nine selected cases and lend your voice through letters, emails, or social media to support those facing persecution. Stop by to take part in this impactful effort!

We'll provide sample letters, supplies, and inspiration for writing. Prefer social media? We've got content for you to share. Can't join us on Dec. 8? Campaign materials are already available, and the effort runs through January!



For more info and a sneak peek at the 9 "cases": <https://amnesty.ca/write-for-rights/>
Marilyn Gaa & Ruth Merriott



DECEMBER

YEAR END DONATIONS



Looking to make a donation in December? Make sure you donate before the end of the month to get a 2024 tax receipt. Put your donation in the collection plate at any service up until December 29th. You can also donate through Canada Helps or PayPal right up until the 31st. Note that the church office will be closed from December 21st through to the new year.

Andrew Mills, Treasurer

SHARING OUR ABUNDANCE



MINISTER'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In December, our Sharing the Plate recipient will be the Minister's Discretionary Fund. This fund provides confidential assistance to those facing emergency financial needs, such as food, shelter, or safety. Your contributions directly support congregants and community members in crisis.

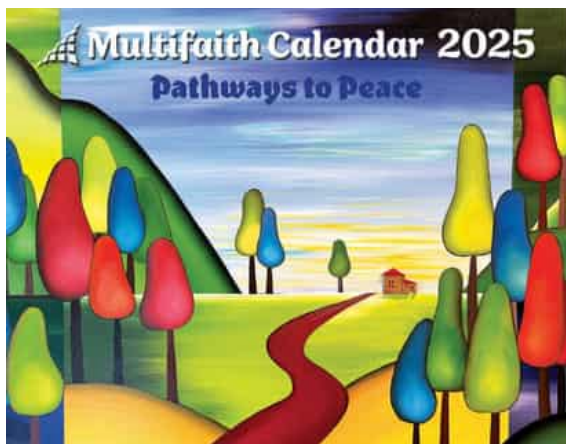
Thank you for your generosity and kind hearts,
Rev. Rosemary Morrison

TAXABLE CAPITAL GAINS? SAVE TAX BY DONATING

This has actually happened at UCE: individuals discover that one of their investments has gained in value over time, and if they sell or otherwise dispose of it, they will have to pay capital gains tax on half of the increase.

But there's a legal dodge! If you donate "securities" (example, bonds, shares, mutual funds, etc.) directly to a charity, you can avoid that tax. Plus you receive a charitable receipt for the market value of the security you donated.

Ruth Merriott, Endowment Trustee



Audrey Brooks has already started selling the 2025 edition of the calendar. Please look for her on Sundays or contact her at audbrook@telusplanet.net. Calendars are \$16.00, save additional shipping charges and order it from Audrey to support the work of the centre. For more information about the art, please click here: <https://www.edminterfaithcentre.ca/2025-multifaith-calendar-pathways-to-peace/>



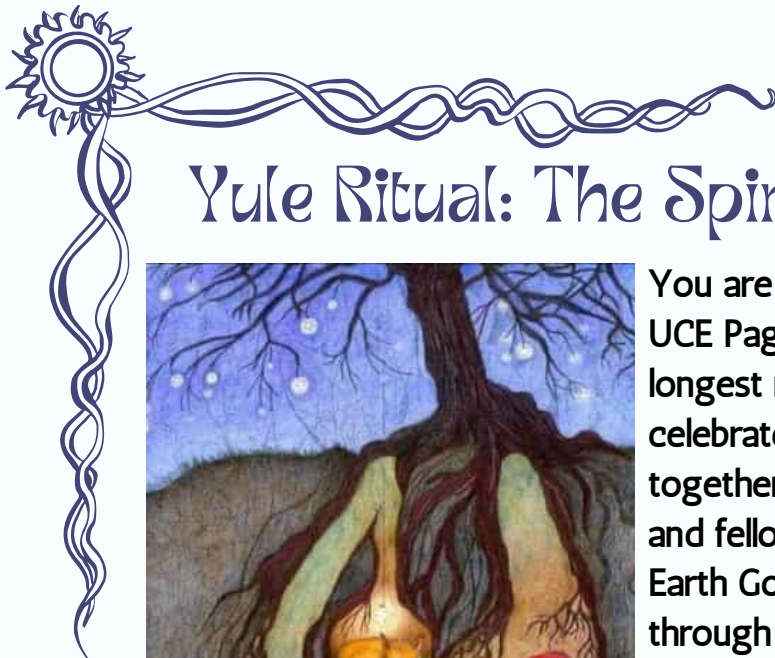
LIFE LONG SPIRITUAL GROWTH AT UCE



For December's Theme Package, click here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UknIJLDrUEITTIE4ouv7M74wbkj2WJs5/view?usp=drive_link

Check out the Soul Matters display at church for more inspiration and information



Yule Ritual: The Spirit of Solstice



You are warmly invited to join the UCE Pagan Chalice Circle on this longest night of the year as we celebrate the winter solstice together. We will share laughter and fellowship, give thanks to the Earth Goddess who sustains us through the darkness and cold, and prepare gifts for the many small creatures who, like us, await the return of the sun. Everyone is welcome.

Saturday December 21 at 7pm





You are invited to a free

Christmas

DINNER PARTY

Edmonton Unitarian Church
10804 119St

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

DECEMBER

Wednesday | **25** | AT 4 PM

Doors open at 12pm

Please pre-register by email
Draggingyouthshows@gmail.com



CUC Events



Rising Together: Unitarian Universalists of Colour Wednesday, Dec 11, 5:30 pm MT

<https://cuc.ca/events/rising-together-unitarian-universalists-of-colour-december-2024>

Black folks, Indigenous folks and people of colour (BIPOC) are often in the minority in Unitarian Universalists congregations and communities. Gathering together with others who share similar identities and experiences can reduce isolation and support us in getting our spiritual needs met. Rising Together is the place where we can find each other!

Connect and Deepen

Saturday Dec 21: REFLECTING – 2:00 pm MT

<https://cuc.ca/events/connect-and-deepen-december-2024/1734796800/1734802200/>



Reflecting can be an intentional practice, an accidental occurrence, and many other things. What important roles does Reflecting play in your life? What practices help you to do it? Host: Linda Thomson

Congregational Conversations: December Meetings



* Challenges of Being a Congregational Leader
Wednesday, Dec. 11:00 am MT
<https://cuc.ca/events/congregational-conversations-challenges>

* Success stories
Saturday, Dec. 7, 11:00 am MT
<https://cuc.ca/events/congregational-conversations-december/1733576400/1733581800/>

Have you been listening to the [UU Expressions recordings](#)?
Join us to share Insights, questions, and possibilities.





Pastoral Care

The newly minted Pastoral Care Team was active this summer at the UCE, offering practical, spiritual, and emotional support to our congregation. Members and friends were helped with housing, visiting and messages of care.

The team is ready to continue this fall!

How We Help:



Meal Deliveries: For those recovering and unable to cook.



Transportation: For rides to church.



Friendly Visits: For those in senior residences or with mobility issues.



We can also send caring cards upon request.

For assistance:

Contact Gloria Krenbrenk our Caring Connections Dispatcher at 780-668-9166 or at ucecares@uce.com.

To contact the whole team **anytime**, there is an easy way to do this. Simply go to our website, <https://www.uce.ca/contact-us/> and click on the pastoral care link.

Rev. Rosemary, Carol Hutchings, Alec Moorji and Gloria Krenbrenk



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 Renamed Listen Wi-Fi

Listen Wi-Fi is a service to replace our aging FM radios.

First time user

Step 1: Connect to UCE wifi on your mobile device

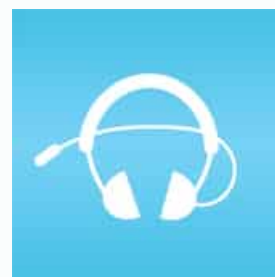
- In WiFi settings select UCE
- Type in Password:

Step 2: Download Listen WiFi App (from app store)

Step 3: Tap on Listen WiFi app on your device

Step 4: Select venue - UCE

Step 5: Adjust volume on your device



Returning user

Step 1: Connect to UCE wifi on your mobile device

- In WiFi settings select UCE
- Type in password if it has not been saved

Step 2: Tap on the Listen WiFi app

Step 3: Select venue - UCE

Step 4: Adjust volume on your device





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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 2024

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|----------------------|---|---|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| 10:30 am A Dicken's Christmas  | | | | 7:15 pm Chorealis Rehearsal | | |
| 10:30 am Presence, Not Presents Write for Rights Day  | | | | 7:15 pm Chorealis Rehearsal | | |
| 10:30 am Mitten Tree  | | | 7:00 pm Blue Christmas  | 7:15 pm Chorealis Rehearsal | | 7:00 pm Yule Ritual (Solstice)  |
| 10:30 am A Very UU Christmas  | Church Office Closed | Church Office Closed 7:00 pm The Magic of a Child's Christmas  | Church Office Closed Christmas Open House Doors Open at 1:00 pm  | Church Office Closed | Church Office Closed | |
| 10:30 am Sertvice | Church Office Closed | Church Office Closed | Church Office Closed Happy New Year  | Church Office Closed | Church Office Closed | |
| | Church Office Closed | Church Office Opens! | | | | |