



THE Chalice

NEWSLETTER OF THE
ELORA & FERGUS UNITARIAN CHURCH
JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2010

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We freely gather to explore spirituality, truth and meaning in our lives, and to provide a base for our children's spiritual growth. We welcome the free exchange of ideas in an environment of respect for diverse beliefs, backgrounds and theologies. We join together in fellowship to celebrate our uniqueness as individuals and to reach out to our community guided by the principles of Unitarian Universalism.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is with great sadness that I inform you that I will be stepping down as President. The reason for this is that I will not be attending this church as often as I have been over the past few years. My new life partner has found a church and I will be going there with him and finding a new spiritual home. This doesn't mean I will never be here in the future, just not as often.

I also feel that I am not driven by a vision for this church as past Presidents have been. Perhaps by my stepping aside there will be room for someone who does to take this congregation to a new level. I truly hope that will be the case.

The nominating committee has been working at finding a new president and I wish them luck in their search.

Catharina Walhout, President



THANK YOU CATHARINA!

Let's all applaud Catharina for a job well done! She was an inspiration for us, went to CUUL school, took me there too, and we both were very stimulated by this experience, recommended to all of you who would like to

get more involved with Unitarianism and leadership. She took the plunge to be our president as well and she put her stamp onto the church with giving people adequate room to try new things and not being afraid of it. Getting us into the Christmas parade, promoting the church, upgrading the website. This all did get new people in, also via the Yoga. She would gently but firmly urge us on to get things done before deadlines.

Catharina went in my honest opinion beyond the call, as she travelled all the way from Guelph, where she lives, and a town which has a fine and solid Unitarian congregation. But she felt bonded with us and stayed with us, even as president. My hat off for that, because if I lived in Guelph I would have been a regular at the Guelph church right away, with maybe popping into our Elora & Fergus Unitarian Church just once in a while.

I see Catharina as a gentle, soft spoken, intelligent, kind person and friend, always a big smile, warm and welcoming, lending a helping hand. I will miss her very much as president but also as a weekly friend to meet at the congregation. We wish her all the best and hope she still will be able to pop in every now and then! Thank you, Catharina!

- Ellen Papenburg, Lay Chaplain and past president

WON'T YOU JOIN US?

2010: The year of the tiger in the Chinese calendar. A time to reflect upon the old and to chart new directions. So it is within the church community a time to look at where we are now and where we want to be in the future.

We are a group of diverse individuals with diverse beliefs building a caring, welcoming community together. As a democratic church community all members have a voice in shaping the future. Together we inspire and challenge one another to take action in the world.

If you feel that ours is a community in which you can grow spiritually and can find a home and a sense of belonging we invite you to consider becoming a member.

There are no specific spiritual or religious beliefs that you must profess. Membership indicates that you are in sympathy with the Mission of the church and will affirm the Unitarian Principles & Purposes found on the Sunday Order of service, and that you make an annual financial contribution to the church as you are able.

As a new member you will have voting privileges at the AGM and can serve on any church committee. By sharing your time and talents with the Fellowship you will become an integral part in shaping our community.

Services held each Sunday will also become more meaningful and personal to you.

WHAT IS HOLDING YOU BACK?

For more information on becoming a member, contact Chris Nye. Membership committee at church, or by email to chrisnye@sympatico.ca or call 519 846 0552.

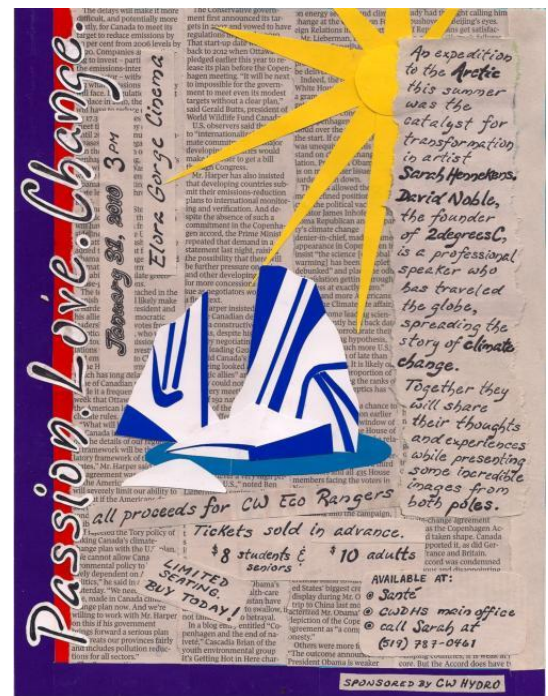
PASSION, LOVE, CHANGE

Climate Change and Human Transformation

Sunday, Jan. 31, 3 PM at the Elora Gorge Cinema

An expedition to the Arctic this past summer was the catalyst for transformation in artist and activist Sarah Hennekens. David Noble, the founder of 2degrees C (www.2degreesc.ca) is a professional speaker who has traveled the globe, spreading the story of climate change. Together they will share their thoughts and experiences while presenting some incredible images from both poles.

This event is sponsored by Centre Wellington Hydro and is a fundraiser for the CWDHS Environmental Group. Tickets \$10 and \$8 for students and seniors. Donations welcome. Tickets available at Sante in Elora or contact Sarah at 519-787-0461.



THE QUARRY AND UNICAMP

Possibly the largest limestone quarry of North America is going to be established less than 3 km next to our Unitarian Summer camp of 40 years: Unicamp.

The Boston based Highland Companies bought up about 8000 acres of prime agricultural land under the guise of enabling year round potato farming and are now proposing to dig a 200 foot deep excavation near the source of our water for a limestone quarry which will ultimately be more than 2400 acres.

Basically all waters in SW Ontario are in danger as this excavation could drain the headwaters of many rivers who have their origin in this area. The Grand River, Nottawasaga, Saugeen rivers would all be affected. Thousands and thousands of trees were already cut and 20 perfectly livable houses demolished. The residents of Melancthon are very worried and Unicamp is very concerned as well as our springs are the life blood of our little lake, marshes and landscape of the camp.



Water is very important to us all. We celebrated water with a spiritual communion at the start of our new season. Spirituality cannot be sustained without putting it to action. So Jim Sannes and Ellen Papenburg (past president of Unicamp) have attended the Public Meetings asking questions and are attending the Melancthon Township Council meetings every month. This is North of Shelburne and these meetings start at 9 a.m. We have gone there through snow storms and through thick fog hiding the wind turbines which otherwise so prominently dominate the surrounding landscape.

The application for the aggregate is expected to be submitted within months maybe even weeks. Lawyers of the Highland Companies are starting to flex their muscles to the council and public, with some intimidating effects. This whole process could take years and when approved the quarry would last for decades if not centuries to come.

We will keep you posted on the church egroup.

- Jim & Ellen

UPCOMING POD DUTIES

POD #1 Chris*, Ineke, Ellen & Jim, Leigh & Terisa
Dates: Jan. 31, Feb. 28, Mar. 28, Apr. 25, May 23

POD #2 Kerry*, Deborah, Catharina, Ingrid
Dates: Jan. 10, Feb. 7, Mar. 7, Apr. 4, May 2, May 30

POD #3 Anna* & Don, Miranda, Jill, Louisa & Nardo
Dates: Jan. 17, Feb. 14, Mar. 14, Apr. 11, May 9, June 6

POD #4 Kelsye* & Paul, Jennifer, Julie, David
Dates: Jan. 24, Feb. 21, Mar. 21, Apr. 18, May 16

* denotes contact person for the POD

A COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS

It was through word of mouth that I was informed in mid-November 2009 about a free Christmas dinner that was being organized by Kathy Little of Hooligan's Café in Fergus. Pat Winter, a friend of this congregation, and Kerry Boyle, a long-standing member, both happened in to Hooligan's one day and chatted with Kathy, the friendly cafe owner. Pat then informed me about Kathy's plans to hold the dinner and to reach out to the community through the churches. Could the Unitarian church participate? Why not?!

As it turned out, I was unable to attend the November planning meeting to which Kathy had invited representatives of the various churches across the area. Instead I went in and met with her a few times beforehand to learn about her ideas. In short, she wished to host a free dinner for community members who were too poor to afford a feast, or who might be spending the holiday alone. She hoped to reach such people through the churches.

I shared the idea with the church board. I also shared with them that I knew one person who might be spending Christmas day alone - let's call her Dora. I explained to them that Dora was an elderly woman from a strict religious background, who had been shunned by her family and community for decades after she divorced her abusive husband. She had experienced many hardships over the years and now lived alone in a little apartment in Fergus. We agreed that I would invite her to the dinner.

My family accompanied Dora to the dinner on Christmas day. There were perhaps 80 people in attendance; people of all ages, including many elders, a large youth contingent, as well as a few families with smaller children. The



grace was graciously delivered by one of the ministers in attendance. The food was abundant and delicious. The dessert table was full of homemade pies, cookies and goodies. The carolling was sweetly led by Mary, a talented singer and guitarist. Overall it was a rounding success, with many happy participants.

I had had no idea what to expect from this experience. Food, yes. Carolling, yes. But what I had not expected was the realization that so many people in our own midst, in our own neighbourhoods, are suffering from poverty and loneliness every day - and that it would feel so warm and wonderful to sit down to this meal together. This one evening of celebration and togetherness spoke loudly and clearly to me of the need for a concerted, year-round, collective effort not only to feed the hungry amongst us but to work to finally overcome the barriers that have kept so many so low for so long.

It's funny how word of mouth works; an invitation traveled not through formal channels, but rather through informal friendship and community networks. In this case, the invitation also had the effect of building new relationships among the many people who were lucky enough to attend Kathy's special dinner. Though this was the first of Kathy's community dinners, I truly hope it is not the last; for there is great potential for more cooperation amongst the area's churches and other community groups to reach out a helping hand to people within our community. By word of mouth and by more formal means, more people can become involved in this initiative that touched so many so deeply this Christmas.

- Leigh Brownhill, Vice President



WE HATCH, MATCH AND DISPATCH

Jill Davey and I are the Lay-Chaplains of this congregation and conduct Rites of Passage, like child dedications, memorial ceremonies, funerals, coming of age, saging and croning, pet memorial services, and we are officially licensed to conduct weddings in Ontario. Mostly we do these services for people who are not members with our congregation but who need a meaningful ceremony. In this service we will cover all their religious needs and will respect and include, with sensitivity, those views and needs of family members who might not share the same faith as the couple, the loved one who passed away, or the parents of the child being dedicated. Our services are as such an outreach and service to the community.

It might be good to know that Lay-Chaplaincy services are FREE for Members of our congregation!

All together we conducted this year nine weddings and last year one memorial service. Our memorial services are not known yet. Together with the Lay-Chaplains of our sister church in Guelph we now have a new brochure to be distributed to the funeral homes in Elora, Fergus, Drayton, Listowel, Arthur and other towns.

As we were trained and still follow courses with the Lay-Chaplaincy committee or the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC), we share part of our fee per wedding or memorial service with the congregation (\$50) and CUC (\$10). Part of the \$50 is for our congregation and part of it is being used for a lay-chaplaincy fund which finances brochures or other promotional material to let the world know about our services. Most of our expenses have been financed by ourselves as we will slowly earn this

back. Lay Chaplaincy is not only a service to others but also to ourselves as we get enriched and grow spiritually and practically with each ceremonial service. The term is six years with a possible approval of extended years but it is meant as an opportunity to people to serve but also gain the enrichment and spiritual growth.

- *Ellen Papenburg, Lay Chaplain*

WHO YA GONNA CALL?

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|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| President | Catharina Walhout |
| Vice President | Leigh Brownhill |
| Lay Chaplain | Ellen Papenburg Jill Davey |
| Secretary | Kelsye Coulter |
| Treasurer | Nardo Kuitert |
| Sunday Services | Jim Sannes |
| Social Action | Terisa Turner |
| Communications | Louisa Kuitert |
| Membership | Christine Nye |
| Religious Exploration | Kerry Boyle |





A NEW FINANCIAL YEAR

Yes, I know. Most people think that finances are boring. However, the Church needs funds to operate. We need to rent our service space, have insurance and pay our dues to the CUC – to name but a few of our major expenses. We cannot do it without you, and that is why I want to thank you for stepping up to the plate.

As a rather small group of members, friends and visitors we have not only made donations in the offering basket or by postdated cheques to help sustain our congregation; we have also raised considerable funds for many local charities through our, sadly recently discontinued, yoga group, as well as the Empty Bowls and Bean projects. And we have seen many of you at our yard sale fundraiser back in June. Thanks again for all your kind donations in time, money and goods.

The past few months we had our Canvass period, where we asked our members and a few of our regularly contributing friends for pledges. With these pledged amounts for 2010 and the soon available actual figures for 2009 I will create a budget for 2010 in the weeks to come. The plan is to have this 2010 budget approved by the congregation in a special budget meeting after the church service of February 14th. WE NEED A QUORUM for this service, so I would appreciate it if all members could attend, or provide another member with a proxy to vote on their behalf. So I hope to see you there!

- *Nardo Kuitert, Treasurer*

COPENHAGEN

While the world burns, the peoples' assembly in Copenhagen's December 2009 post-Kyoto negotiations commits to 'system change not climate change'

By Terisa E. Turner*

At the climate change talks in Copenhagen from December 10 through 19, 2009 the governments failed to agree on emissions cuts. But civil society organizations did unite globally behind a call for system change, not climate change (<http://www.klimaforum09.org/Declaration>). The transition to living fuels, to solar energy and to social justice was presented as a transition to a democratic commons on a global scale. There is now in place a global coordinating committee that is organizing for a November 2010 popular assembly to parallel the governments' next climate change meeting in Mexico.

The nine Latin American states in ALBA¹ successfully held out in the final hours of the climate talks in Copenhagen, defending the United Nations democratic process that requires consensus. The COP 15 (the fifteenth Conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, or UNFCCC) ended with a very sharp division of the world's governments between the green capitalists on the one hand (business as usual as Earth careens further into tipping points and meltdowns) and, on the other, ecosocialists of many stripes and organizations all strongly committed to assisting in the emergence of a

¹ The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, *Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América*, or ALBA, is an organization intended to socially, politically, and economically integrate nations of Latin America and the Caribbean. Started by Cuba and Venezuela in 2004, ALBA now has nine member countries including Bolivia, Nicaragua, The Dominican Republic, Honduras, Ecuador, Antigua, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

new global political economy that reverses ecocidal accumulation without end.

Of great importance in any appreciation of the deadlock inside the official talks is the issue of money. The private sector is paying for public subsidies. Some thirty billion dollars for the first three years (2010-2012) and then 100 billion dollars per year up to 2020) have been committed by the USA and other states. Most of this is targeted for the global South, for climate change 'mitigation' on terms similar to the disastrous, failed 'market reform' conditions that continue to be required by the World Bank. This means more structural adjustment and more neoliberal enclosures for private profit. There is palpable outrage at this neo-imperial effort to extend corporate rule in the face of dramatic market failure and the collapse of capitalist relations all around.

At the popular assembly in the evening of 18 December a very different and jubilant atmosphere reigned. The Danish civil society organizations had mounted a terrific peoples' assembly. This was a first. Never before had the climate change talks been paralleled by a popular congress.

There are two more key features of the peoples' achievement. First, the focus is on action against the climate chaos perpetrators, the big profiteers and Big Oil. Second, there is astounding unanimity that solutions are in hand and they are *systemic*, not piecemeal. This is where prefigurations of ecosocialism comes in. In dramatic contrast to this holistic unity, profiteers remain divided and fixated on the hopeless reductionism of counting molecules of carbon and trying to put a commodity price on them.

As the events in Copenhagen came to an end, very much in the evidence was the superb contribution of women, indigenous and third world peoples. The greatest victories cluster around the demand to shut down the tar sands, and more widely to stop all fossil fuel production. Keep the oil under the soil, keep the coal in the hole, keep the tar sand under the land - as OilWatch demands. This demand, obscure and on the margins for the period since it was put forward by Ecuador civil society in Kyoto in 1997 is now the front line demand.

The new social form in robust evidence in Copenhagen is the popular commons or what can be called ecosocialism. The new social vehicle that is nurturing this transformation (and fossil to solar energy transition) is the Climate Camp. In fact the peoples' assembly was a kind of giant Climate Camp, evoking teach-ins and love-ins of the 1960s, as direct actions launched out to free political prisoners and challenge climate criminals. We are going to see the phenomena of climate camps explode in the coming months.



Photo (by Hauwa CLR James Baker Turner): Terisa E. Turner, inspired by the interconnectedness of the web of all life, advocated the shutdown of climate criminals at the December 2009 climate change talks in Copenhagen. Her niece, Adabu Brownhill, who is pursuing a special ecology program in high school, got this T-shirt that reads "Keep the oil in the soil, the coal in the hole, the tarsand in the land."

*Terisa Turner is an energy economist from the oil, gas and tar sands area of northern Alberta. She is also the Social Action Committee coordinator, Fergus-Elora Unitarian Universalists. From December 10-19, 2009 she blogged from Copenhagen for the journal *Canadian Dimension*: <http://canadiandimension.com/blog/>. Her website is: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/~terisatu/>.

WHAT'S ON AT CHURCH IN JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2010

Church service starts at 10:00 am

Jan. 10 FIRE CEREMONY AND STONE SOUP

We will start the New Year with Stone Soup and have a fire ceremony to remember in our hearts those issues in our lives we would like to resolve or forget, and will symbolically make them dissolve into the universe.

**Jan. 17 WORLD RELIGION DAY
"Close Encounters with World Religions"**

With Guest Speaker J.W. Windland
In Steven Spielberg's movie Close Encounters of the Third Kind, Richard Dreyfus' character, Roy Neary, experiences a profound and transforming encounter with "the other." Using the movie as a springboard, Windland relates the story of one person's profound and transforming experiences through a lifetime of encounters with the multi-coloured wisdom of the religions of the world. Gleaned from these experiences are shared insights available to all who passionately pursue religious diversity from the simply intellectual to the intimately experiential.

Jan. 24 "BEFORE YOU DIE"

John Barker, a retired clergy person whose church conducted 70 funerals in his last year of ministry, will be speaking about the preparations one makes that ease the grief of those who are left. Included will be information about the Memorial Society, its work, and future directions in death care.

Jan. 31 "I AM SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT FURTHER NOTICE"

Personal Transformation and the upheaval that is often part of the process. Why it is our personal spiritual responsibility to both

promote unique thought and embrace genuine growth without judgement and the benefits that can be ours when we all 'come out'.

Speaker: Marcie Macari

**Feb. 7 TRYING TO LIVE OUT THE 1ST
AND 7TH UU PRINCIPLE**

Tales from living in an intentional community that is struggling to be an eco-village. For information on the community, see www.wholevillage.org.
Guest Speaker: Mairy Beam

Feb. 14 FOOD AND SPIRITUALITY

With Guest Speaker Fr. James Profit, executive director of Ignatius Centre of Guelph. He is the founder of the Ecology Project and a Jesuit priest trained in agriculture (B.S. Agr), rural sociology and theology. He leads retreats and workshops on everything from agriculture to climate change to the greening of the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius to groups in Canada, the US, the Caribbean and Europe.

Feb. 21 JOINT SERVICE WITH THE BAHÁ'Í GROUP

Service Leader: Kerry Boyle

Feb. 28 SOCIAL ACTION (PRIDE)

Possibly with the Rainbow Choir. Details will follow.

