

The Quest

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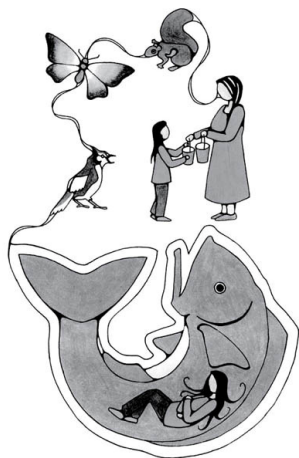
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**November 2017
Volunteer of the
Month**

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Unitarian Church of Calgary
1703 1st Street, NW T2M 4P4

www.unitarianscalgary.org
Phone: 403-276-2436



November 2017 Services: Story

November 5th Celebrating Ella Fitzgerald

On this 100th anniversary year of the birth of Ella Fitzgerald we offer this "Spirituality of ..." service in her honour.

Presenter: Rev Debra Faulk

Music: Jazz on the Side: Michelle Dias (vocals), Jane Perry (piano), Cora Castle (bass), Sarah Nielsen (drums)

(MACG) which brings together organizations and communities of Calgary to transform our city into a community which acts justly and respects all.

Presenter: Rev Ryan Anderson

Service Leader: Rev Debra Faulk

Music: Music Director Jane Perry

This service includes a recognition of new members.

November 11th Saturday 10:30 Stories Told, Stories Remembered

The Remembrance Day Service honours veterans and those impacted by armed conflicts while holding a light on peace.

Presenter: Rev Debra Faulk

Music: Music Director Jane Perry with Chor Vida. Town Hall to discuss Calgary Unitarians Visual Identity will follow.

November's Third Sunday Forum: "Identity Stories"

The Social Justice Committee offers two compelling TED Talks that relate to our theme of the month for viewing and discussion. One is by a woman on leaving the extremely conservative church of her youth; the other by an African writer on the danger of a single story when there's never just one. Light lunch provided. Moderator: Susan Stratton. Noon – 1:00 pm, Sunday November 19th.

November 12th A Story to Tell

Inspiration for this morning's service comes in part from the life story of African poet and storyteller Birago Diop.

Presenters: Rev Debra Faulk and Cassy Welburn

Music: Multigenerational Choir, UUphonia, and Music Director Jane Perry

November 19th Community Organizing, The Story and Possibility

The potential for collaborative justice work and contributing to systemic change are at the heart of community organizing. Ryan Anderson is the lead organizer for the Metro Alliance for the Common Good

November 26th More Than Just a Story

"Story is what we use to explain our world. Story is what we use to create identity. More than that, increasingly it seems apparent that the stories we tell ourselves literally impact our health." (Dr. Lewis Mehl-Madrona) Join us this morning as we explore stories, identity and healing.

Service Leaders and Presenters: Lynn Nugent, Kathryn Burwash. Mary Anna Louise Kovar **Music:** TBD

Debra's Deliberations



This month's dual themes of Story and Identity are rich in content. While these themes have a significant overlap of meaning between them, each of these concepts has its unique qualities.

There is a deep recognition of the importance of sharing our stories. This is especially apparent in Reconciliation work. The importance of hearing stories, of learning the history is the starting point. It is how we come to know and trust each other. I was recently honored with an invitation to an Indigenous Elder Circle. I shared the work we are doing with the THR Reflection Guides and the Blanket Exercise with this group. A significant part of the feedback I received was about how trust had been broken, that it must be rebuilt and how the sharing of stories is an important element of this vital work. This happens in relationship, too: sharing our personal stories, in face to face encounters builds trust and improves relationships. This is what we identified in our Vision Statement as a core value: to welcome and deepen relations.

Telling our story is also how we express and shape our identity. Some of you, hopefully most of you now, are aware of the Visual Identity Team working to make UCC more visible in the community. (See full article in this issue.) Many of our newcomers comment on their delight in finding us. Often there is a question of why didn't they know about us sooner or that they have been searching for a community such as this for a long time. The Visual Identity Team is working to change this, to increase our visibility in the wider community.

One of the issues that has emerged in this exploration of our community identity is the naming of our community as a "church". Some UU congregations have chosen to not use this as an identifier because is the name for a Christian house of worship, as Synagogue is for a Jewish house of worship, Mosque for Muslim or Temple for Buddhist. I have heard many members say they invite friends to come and have had their offer declined because their friends say they are not interested in "church". Yet the invitation was offered because there is a recognition of the gift of a spiritual community.

May our engagement with this month's themes bring insight along with questions and may we each engage in this process of sharing our story and examining our identity as a community.

November 4-Others

The **Metro Alliance For the Common Good** - Calgary (MACG) brings together organizations (faith, unions, NGOs, educators) to transform our city into a community which acts justly and respects all. The current focus is Reconciliation and Seniors Concerns.

***4-Others for November:** **4 Others is a social justice outreach program that financially supports non-profit initiatives that align with our values. Each month, half the unidentified and all the identified money collected at church services will be donated to that month's designated non-profit/organization. The selected organization must have charitable status.*

Debra's Hours

Office Hours:

Wednesday 10am – 6p.m.

Thursday: 9a.m. – 5p.m.

(Drop-in tea with the minister 2:00-3:00)

Other times, please book an appointment.

(403) 702-6486

How Can We Get More Visibility in Calgary?

The leadership of UCC believe we need to look at how we promote ourselves in Calgary. What is our image in the community, and is it consistent with our mission statement? We firmly believe that there are many Calgarians looking for a spiritual home who don't know that we exist. How do we get the word out there about us, particularly to millennials and young families? This is a challenge being faced by many congregations in Canada.

The Saskatoon Unitarians completed a similar image review and publicity project in 2016, thanks to a 2015 Sharing Our Faith grant. They have been very helpful sharing all their research, reports, marketing plans, and templates. As a result, we believe we can leverage their results so that we don't repeat unnecessary sections; we want to build on their learnings where appropriate. Those of you who attended the growth and vitality stream at the regional conference, heard Erica Bird of Saskatoon discuss their project.

We received a Sharing Our Faith grant from the Canadian Unitarian Council this May that will cover most of the costs of this project. We have also applied for a West Trust grant to cover the balance.

Phase 1 of our project, already underway, is a refresh and redesign of our website so that it displays appropriately to mobile devices. We have already purchased a UUA website template and are in the process of transferring our content to our new site. Many, many thanks to Ann Kyle for all her hard work here.

Phase 2 of this project has 4 main parts -

- a) Visual Identity: review our image within Calgary, including our current name and our logo, and create a new visual identity kit that can be used for all new signage, graphic design etc.
- b) Marketing Templates: create new graphic templates for promotional materials, giving a distinctive look to UCC posters and advertisements, social media, eNews, and The Quest.
- c) New physical signs outside our building, consistent with our new image.
- d) A New Marketing Plan outlining strategies and tactics to promote UCC in print, online, and in social media.

We applied to have a fourth-year graphic design student at ACAD do a work assignment on this project and we are delighted that Candace de Vuyst will be working with us. Candace will have new logos and poster templates for the congregation to look at in a town hall on November 12th. Members will have a chance to give her input then and also online. A final proposal will be voted on at the congregational meeting on December 3rd.

If you would like to be involved in this project, please contact Ned Leavitt: president@unitarianscalgary.org. We are particularly interested in people with marketing and social media experience.

♪ UpBeat News with Jane Perry ♪

Let the concerts begin! Over the next seven weeks, all of our church-based vocal ensembles and our resident choirs will be performing. Here's the list for November— consider attending to cheer for our in-house talent and to raise your own spirit in the process!



Multigenerational Choir

Rehearsals: Sunday, November 5 and Sunday, November 12
9:30am to 10:00am in Panabaker Hall both days.

The group will sing in the morning service on Sunday November 12. This is the choir for singers of all ages and stages, where everyone gets to sing the tune. Join us!

UCC Choirs' Winter Concert: Gospel Music at the Unitarian Church!

Saturday, November 18 at 7:30pm in Panabaker Hall

UUphonia, Chor Vida and TriUU put their talents together for one amazing evening of African-American spirituals and hand-clapping gospel music, along with selections that were inspired by this tradition. Tickets will be available from Sunday October 29 at Sunday coffee hour and also online through www.brownpapertickets.com. \$20 regular, \$15 senior/student, with a pay-what-you-can option available when buying your tickets in person. Free for those age 18 and under. We are anticipating a full house for this show, so make sure to buy your tickets in advance!

One Voice Chorus presents "Bridges"

Saturday, November 25 at 7:30pm at the Leacock Theatre of Mount Royal University

In this concert, One Voice Chorus will partner with Indigenous guest artists Chantal Stormsong Chagnon and Dwight Farahat to look at truth and reconciliation, celebrate traditional and contemporary Indigenous art forms, and explore some ways in which non-Indigenous folks can be good allies to their Indigenous neighbours. Tickets: \$25/\$20 through www.brownpapertickets.com

The BarberEllas (a barbershop group for queer gals and pals) will be performing as part of HIV Community Link's World AIDS Day concert on the evening of Thursday, November 30. Check out concert information at www.hivcl.org.

And looking ahead:

Sunday, December 10 at 7:30pm: Calgary Renaissance Singers & Players present "Exultate! Rejoice!"

Saturday, December 16 at 2:00pm: Vocal Latitudes world-music choir presents their winter concert.

Sunday, December 24 at 7:00pm: Chor Vida contributes seasonal anthems to our Christmas Eve service.



Religious Exploration Program

OWL is Flying Again!

Honest, accurate information about sexuality changes lives. It dismantles stereotypes and assumptions, builds self-acceptance and self-esteem, fosters healthy relationships, improves decision making, and has the potential to save lives. For these reasons and more, we are proud to offer Our Whole Lives (OWL), a comprehensive, lifespan sexuality education course.



We will be rolling out the OWL Program for various ages groups year-round. **If you are interested in registering for classes, volunteering or becoming a facilitator let us know!** This is life changing education! Contact DRE Sheila MacMaster for more details at dre@unitarianscalgary.org.



This year's Christmas Pageant is the story of The Little Christmas Tree. It is a sweet story about a little tree who is not chosen to be taken home by a family, and the community around the Little Tree coming together to bring comfort, joy and ultimately, belonging.



Plans for the Christmas Pageant are already underway with casting complete and learning the script and songs in progress. There is a Sunday in-class rehearsal November 26th, and an after-church rehearsal December 3rd that includes lunch. Our final rehearsal is Saturday, December 9th (lunch is also provided).

The pageant will take place during the Sunday service on Dec. 10th.

We are looking for help to bring this production to life. We need crew members for costumes, set, backstage and lighting. No experience necessary! Contact our Director Michael Leboldus at mleboldus@gno.org

Wow, What A Weekend!

Calgary's Unitarians really stepped up to the challenge of welcoming colleagues from across the Western Region (and beyond) for the Western Region Fall Gathering in October. From Friday's opening ingathering ceremony to the Saturday keynote and workshop streams, to the dinner and the open mic entertainment, to Sunday's networking sessions and the inspiring worship, our visitors and our Calgary attendees were welcomed, valued, included, and entertained. Many of them expressed their delight with the experience and happiness with the opportunities they had to learn and to grow.

I want to thank the following important people on the organizing team:

- Co-chair, Debra Faulk
- Facilities lead, Bernie Amell, transportation and billeting coordinators Roy Leitch and Sophia Lang
- Program lead, Lynn Nugent and her speaker wranglers Cathy McCurdy and Bev Webber
- Hospitality lead Dean Kasner and his kitchen geniuses Simon Dunn, Hedda Zahner, Bev Webber, Linda Brown, Fay and Raymond Giroux, Marie Collins
- Registration lead Duff Bond
- Rebekah Mobley-Kasner and Sabrina del Ben, who supported the Youth Con
- Three Calgary members who led workshops - Jeff Webber, Hedda Zahner, and Linda Brown
- The CUC's Western Region and BC Region Congregational Support person Joan Carolyn whose support and guidance were invaluable.
- We had great speakers and workshop leaders, and wonderful musical offerings from Tony Turner and Jane Perry.

We had the largest adult attendance, the largest local congregation attendance, and the largest Youth Con attendance in recent memory. Thank you to all for attending, and thank you for your volunteer efforts that made this weekend a success!

Next year's Fall Gathering will be in Winnipeg, on October 19 - 21.. Mark it on your calendar!

Mich Michell, Conference Co-Chair



This month we recognize and thank:

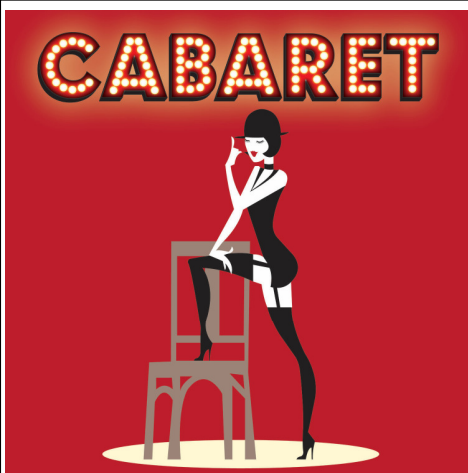
Keith Barnes deserves kudos for the very touching solo he performed during one of our Sunday services, and to continue the musical theme we must also mention the wonderful Tribute Band, Cora Castle, Ev Dewar, Jane Perry and Hedda Zahner for their super performance during another service.

Kudos go to Dean Kasner and his many helping hands for the scrumptious Thanksgiving dinner, and to Liz Blackstock for planning a "Souper Sunday". Of course, kudos to all of the soup providers!

Jeb Gaudet deserves our thanks for his wayside pulpit. It is always inspiring.

Jane Ebbern deserves thanks for her visual identity project, and finally: the organizers for the Regional Fall Gathering, who are, Mich Michell, Duff Bond, Bernie Amell, Lynn Nugent, Dean Kasner, Sabrina del Ben, Heather Walker, Jim Washbrook, and Rebekah Mobely-Kasner. It was an enormous task that they took on, and a simple thank you does not seem enough.

This is just a sampling of the many people who contribute in numerous ways to our community. When you catch someone in the act of kindness and service please share the info by emailing Kudos@unitarianscalgary.org.



Cabaret Memories??

The History and Archives Committee, along with Sheila Ward (Cabaret emcee since 2007), is compiling a history of the Unitarian Church of Calgary Cabaret.

We need your help! Please share with us any materials or memories you may have about previous cabarets – We are looking for the following:

-old programs, photos (with date and names of persons in photo) (we can copy and return originals to you)

-factual information – when was the first cabaret? Who directed the choir? Etc.

-any stories you'd like to share re. your memories of past cabarets – funny stories, memorable performances, bloopers, etc.

Please pass along anything you'd like to share to Loretta Biasutti, Jim Bowman, or Sheila Ward. Small items can be placed in the History and Archives mailbox, or contact Loretta 403-249-5945 biasutti@shaw.ca

Submission Guidelines for UCC Media

At the Unitarian Church of Calgary, we have three publications to share information about upcoming events: the Sunday service announcements, the weekly eNews and the monthly Quest. When creating content, the two most important issues are word count and impact. For the first issue, the best advice is brevity. For the second, consider the “5 Ws: Who, What, Where, When, Why.” Not every publication needs all 5, but it's a good place to start.

For example:

Sunday Service Announcements: This is the smallest space and needs the least content @ 50-60 words. This submission needs to be short and contain the most basic information so we can accommodate as many announcements as possible. Think “What, Where, When”, so it's “Just the fact, ma'am.”

Deadline for Service Announcements is Wednesday noon.

eNews: For equal space to be given to as many events as possible without overloading recipients, the word count is @ 100-150 words. If you submit a Quest article on the same event, you can point your readers in that direction, i.e. “Click the link above for more information in this month's Quest”.

Deadline for eNews is Tuesday midnight.

The Quest: This is where you have the most room and flexibility. The word count is @ 500 words; this is where you can really tell the story of your event. Who is sponsoring it; what it's all about; where the event will be held; when it is (date, time) and lastly why it's being held (fundraiser, education, fellowship) You can also submit artwork, photographs taken of the event, etc. Be creative!

Deadline for The Quest is the 15th of every month (except July) unless negotiated in advance.

Remember: the word count is a maximum, not a minimum! Don't feel you **MUST** submit 500 words for a Quest article. If you have questions or would like assistance, please email and ask.



What Does It Mean To Be a Community of Story?

Our lives are not just made up of stories; they are also *made by* stories. This might be the most important reminder of this month. Indeed, who of us hasn't felt controlled by a story? Stuck in a story? Hopeless about the way our story will end up? Simply put, stories write us as much as we write them.

For instance, who can't relate to the friend that tells us that her family "clings to the story about how I'm the clumsy one." We've never seen our friend trip, not once. Or drop a thing, ever. And yet, somehow, when she goes to her parents' home or back to a family reunion, she spills coffee on at least one outfit, stubs at least one toe and stumbles down at least one step. There it is: the power of story!

Or think about our current struggles with economic or racial justice. The incredible income gap is described as "natural" or "the result of complex global dynamics over which we have little control." Similarly, the story of race in our country is told with an "entrenched" story arc. Talk about a debilitating way of telling the story.

So let's tell a new story! This is the message of our faith: We have a choice. Our stories are not predetermined. Remember that old theological debate our UU fore-fathers and mothers gave their lives for? Some said that God had predestined not just the big story of humanity, but our individual stories too. Some of us were slotted for heaven and others for hell. And God had written the list in ink. Nothing any of us could do about it.

"Well," said our spiritual ancestors, "that's a bit harsh, don't you think!" Forget this extreme fate-driven story, they said. Freedom has a much bigger role than we're giving it credit for. God is not so much the author of the story as she is the magical muse that needles and nags us to put our own stamp on the narratives before us. In other words, we come from a long-line of spiritual relatives who agreed with Shakespeare that "All the world's a stage," but then went on to clarify that it's an improv show to which we've all been invited.

So fate and freedom? This month is much more about the tension between these two than one might have thought, leaving us with questions like: Are you an actor conforming to the scripts handed to you? Or have you found your own way of becoming a director, a screenwriter, an author? How are you struggling right now to regain control of the storyline of your life? How are you and your friends working to regain control of the storyline of our community? Our country?

Or maybe control is not your work. Maybe your spiritual work is about finding a new storyline. Maybe retirement, divorce, illness or the empty-nest has closed the book on one story and is inviting you to leap into a whole new narrative. Does that leave you excited about what's to come? Scared? A bit of both?

Whatever it is. Wherever you are at. Don't give the storyline away. That's the message of our faith. And hopefully the gift of this month.

What's your story?





Our Spiritual Exercises

Option A:

Remembering the Wisdom of Your Plot Twist

No one gets through life without a plot twist. Unexpected events happen to us all: a death, illness, a divorce or loss of a job. And it's not always something bad: we get a job offer out of nowhere, stumble into love or learn we are pregnant right away when we thought it would take awhile.

Good or bad, the unexpected event usually comes with an unexpected insight. An important value is clarified. A truth is written in neon lights. All those mundane worries and to do lists are put into perspective. But over time, that moment of clarity often fades. The plot twist's wisdom is forgotten. Our resolve to remember takes a back seat to those daily to do lists once again.

This assignment invites you to bring the clarity back:

Reconstruct and remember the story of your plot twist.

Make time to meditate on it, write about it or discuss it with a friend.

Find an object that represents the insight of your plot twist.

Place that object in a place you will see every day.

Come to your group, ready to share your plot twist story and the object that represents the insight it gave you. Most importantly, explain to your group why or why not you've decided to keep that object in view for longer than just this month.

Make time to meditate on it, write about it or discuss it with a friend.

Find an object that represents the insight of your plot twist.

Place that object in a place you will see every day.

Option B:

What's Your Wizard of Oz?

Stories companion us. Most of us fell in love with a "made up" story in our childhood without which navigating our real life story would have been a struggle. For instance, one soul matters members shares that *The Wizard of Oz* was that for her. That lion helped her see that courage comes from community not simply from inside of oneself. The witch and the wizard warned her about types of people to look out for. Dorothy helped her see that answers are found by returning home not just by leaving it. All of them — Dorothy, the Lion, the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodsman, Toto — weren't just characters in a childhood fantasy but companions that accompanied her into and through real life adulthood.

What childhood story gave such companions and guidance to you? Our children would surely name *Harry Potter*. For us, other names likely emerge: *Little House on the Prairie*, *Nancy Drew*, *Sherlock Homes*, *Treasure Island*, *The Lion*, *The Witch & The Wardrobe*, maybe even *The Lord of the Flies* or *David and Goliath*.

This month bring that formative fiction back into your heart and head. Your assignment:

Identify which childhood story served as your guiding tale & bring in a piece of proof about how it influenced your life.

Don't make that second part of the exercise overly complicated. Your "proof" might simply be pulling the book or video right off your shelf and bringing it in. More than one of us are likely to pull out our Luke Skywalker or Princess Leia action figure from the attic.

Some will surely bring in their video copy of "It's a Wonderful Life". Yet another of us might bring in riding boots and explain how she traces her love of horses and her deep self-love back to Black Beauty. The point is to simply take the time to look around your life and find some trace of that "fictitious" children's story in your literal adult world!



Option C:

Your Six-Word Faith Story

Six-word stories are a common exercise in writers' groups because they vividly display of the power of brevity and encapsulation. Think of Caesar's famous quote: "I came. I saw. I conquered." (And it was only three words in its original Latin: *Veni, vidi, veci.*)

This month, you are invited to apply the power of pithiness to your spiritual journey:

Describe your personal religious journey/story in six words!

Here's some inspiration found from all over the internet:

"Seeking him who loved me first."

"Born Jewish. Discovered bacon... still Jewish."

"No more Sunday school. Sleeping in."

"I've fallen and finally got up."

"Fairytale. Thought. Deliberation. Reason. Awakening. Atheist"

"Prayed every night; no one answered."

"I pray. She answers. Each time."

"Brainwashed, manipulated, guilted, awoke, objected, rejected."

"Realized Reality; Expressed Reality, Connected Others"

"Filled the emptiness; Emptied the fullness."

Come to your group ready to explain your six word spiritual journey story. And feel free to use a few more than six words.

Option D:

Bring Your Identity to Dinner

Identities love to come to dinner! Great grandma's German pot roast. Aunt Audrey's pie crust recipe. Norwegian family Christmas and that awful lutefisk. The requirement that great-grandpa's knife with the ivory handle be used to cut the turkey. And with these dinner table traditions, the old stories come out and we are able to tell ourselves into being once again.

So this month, you are invited to concoct an "Identity Dinner." Do it with your wider family and make it a way to pass on your traditions to the kids. Pull together your neighbors or even your Soul Matters group. Simply, ask everyone to bring a dish, an heirloom and a story that celebrates a piece of your heritage and informs who you are to this day.

Simply ask everyone to bring a dish, an heirloom and a story that celebrates a piece of your heritage and informs who you are to this day.

Here's some inspiration to help you get started:

Keep family history alive through food:

<http://tinyurl.com/haejvzq>

Heritage Comes Alive At My Family's Dinner Table:

<http://tinyurl.com/hqvujko>

One important note: For many of us, our heritage and identity now feels under threat. Gathering around a table as a Hispanic or Muslim doesn't feel as safe or celebratory as it could. This is part of the exercise as well. Find a way for the dinner to honor the way our identities are under threat; make sure the dinner involves a commitment to help others feel safe as they embody theirs.



Option E: A Reunion with Your Former Self

A bored sociology student decided he could learn more out in the real world than by sitting in a classroom. So he picked up his camera and took pictures of interesting looking people around town, capturing not only their images but also their stories. Thirty years later he hunted them down to show them those old pictures and give them a reunion with their younger self. Check out pictures of these “reunions” here”:

<http://tinyurl.com/y8rov29a>

<http://tinyurl.com/y9nrnw6n>

This exercise invites you to have a similar reunion with your own former self. Dig through your old photos and find 2 pictures of your “younger self” that best represent your core identity at that time. Then spend some time thinking about what you would say to and ask that younger self if given the chance:

What story would you want to rehash and revisit the most?

How would you thank him or her?

How would you apologize?

What compliments would you give?

What secrets would you tell them to keep? Or not keep?

What warnings would you offer? What encouragement would you give?

Bring your two photos to the group and come ready to share which 1-2 of the questions above best helped you re-connect with your younger self.

Here are two videos to inspire you and get you into the mind frame of reunion:

To the Girl I Was: <http://tinyurl.com/y8qyq8dt> / **The psychology of your future self:** <http://tinyurl.com/q34zkml>

Option F: The Artist Who Helped You Find You

“Artists are always in the vanguard of social change...The music proclaimed our identity; it made every statement we truly wanted to make.” ~Dizzy Gillespie

Art and artists help us find our way. They provide mirrors and containers for our identity. Seeing their work, we see ourselves. Hearing and reading their work, we remember who we are. So hunt down and bring into your group one of the books, songs, paintings, photos or movies that has helped you find (and hold onto) yourself. Come ready to share the story of your first encounter with that piece of art.

Option G: Your T-Shirt

Some of us may wear our heart on our sleeves, but virtually all of us wear our identities on our chests. Our t-shirts don't just inform the world of our allegiances and accomplishments (alma mater, favorite band or sports team), they also tell the world what we want it to be (<https://libertymaniacs.com>). T-shirts announce our clan (<http://101tees.com/50-funny-state-t-shirts>) as well as our class (think about whether that polo logo on your shirt mattered as a teen).

Here's the most important thing about t-shirts: we keep them around forever. You know the t-shirt that embodies your identity because it's the one that has holes in it! The wording has faded and the sleeve is torn, but you don't care! It's a piece of you. No way is anyone going to throw that away!



This month, slip your identify over your head and wear it on your chest when you come to your group. Come ready to tell your group why, although the image has faded, you're still holding on. (New found identities and t-shirts are, of course, welcome as well.)

One last note: Show your minister your t-shirt. Help him or her imagine what an awesome Sunday it would be if everyone (adults and kids) came to church wearing their identity on their chest. Maybe it's time for your church to start an annual "T-Shirt Sunday"! :-)

Truth Healing & Reconciliation Spiritual Practices

Option H:

What's Your Social Identity?

This month, be aware of how people identify themselves. Spend some time considering your own social identities. This infographic may be useful to you: <http://tinyurl.com/y8h2wawa> What did you discover about yourself? About the ways social identities can be put in the background or be "fronted" depending on the context. Come back to the sharing circle with an insight you are willing to share about identity.

Option I:

Consider storytelling?

Consider the role of storytelling in many Indigenous cultures: <http://tinyurl.com/yc9phvmr> Watch one of the videos on this website or one you can find online; even better, find an opportunity to listen to an Indigenous storyteller in your community. What did you learn about yourself through one of those stories?

Spend time reflecting on stories you grew up with from your family's culture(s). Revisit one of the stories from your childhood. How was it used to teach you about cultural beliefs, values, customs, rituals, history, practices, relationships, and ways of life? Come back to the sharing circle with an insight you are willing to share about the role of storytelling in your life and in your family's culture(s). How do these stories root you in your identity?

Your Question

As always, don't treat these questions like "homework" or a list that needs to be covered in its entirety. Instead, simply pick the one question that "hooks" you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal of these questions is not to help you analyze what story means in the abstract, but to figure out what a deeper awareness of story means for your daily living. So, which question is calling to you? Which one contains "your work"?

1. What genre is your current life's story? Are you living a mystery? An adventure story? A romance? A thriller? Are you worried that your story is not interesting enough to be published? Is it a half-finished manuscript stuck in writer's block? Are you in the midst of going back and re-writing the ending?
2. What stories did your "elders" pass down to you? Have you cared for them and passed them on as those elders hoped?
3. What story does your family of origin tell about you? Does that telling leave you feeling seen or misunderstood? Celebrated or unfairly characterized? If mischaracterized, what are your plans to get them to reshape their telling of you? Or is your true story better served by just letting go of trying to change their unfair one?
4. Who do you tell your secret stories to? If the answer is "no one," might it be time to find someone?
5. When has re-telling or re-writing your story healed or saved you? How might re-examining or re-telling a part of your story offer you healing right now?
6. What current cultural or political "story" strikes you as dangerous? How might you step up your commitment and efforts to challenge that dangerously false story? How might you double down on making sure that the true story is known?



7. Has your struggle become your identity? ("Don't let your struggle become your identity." ~Unknown)
8. Are you hiding part of your story from the person you say you "trust the most"?
9. Are you faking a story right now? Are you following a storyline that isn't really you? Does anyone else notice? Do you want them to? What's your plan for bringing this false story to an end?
10. Is your identity longing for more alone time? ("Privacy is crucial to the sense of self." – Oliver Stone)
11. What story did you walk away from? All of us think about that other life — that other story — that we turned down for the one we have now. Whether you regret your past choice or not, that road not taken doesn't ever really go away. It continues to be part of our story. Does that old road want you to return to it and give it another look?
12. Are there parts of your "old" story you need to reclaim or notice, before moving on? Many of our elders told us, "You don't know where you are going unless you know where you come from." When was the last time you made some room for remembering your roots?
13. What's your question? Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to hear it.

Recommended Resources

As always, this is not required reading. We will not analyze or dissect these pieces in our group. They are simply meant to companion you on your journey this month, get your thinking started, and maybe open you to new ways of thinking about what it means to be a community of story.

Definitions

Identity: The set of characteristics by which a person or thing is definitively recognizable or known. from late Latin *identitas*, from Latin *idem* 'same' and *itas* - indicating a state of being

Story: a narrative, either true or fictitious, in prose or verse, designed to interest, amuse, or instruct the hearer or reader; a narration of the events in the life of a person; a report or account of a matter. Synonyms: tale; account; chronicle; narrative; fable; myth; autobiography.

Wise Words

There are no true stories; we are making up every one of them. ~ **Pema Chodron**

There are only true stories. We are discovering the truth in them. ~ **Christina Baldwin**

It's never been more asked of us to show up as only slices of ourselves in different places. ~**Courtney Martin**

We are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful about what we pretend to be. ~**Kurt Vonnegut**

Don't let your struggle become your identity. ~**Unknown**

Hidden in all stories is the One story. The more we listen, the clearer that [universal] Story becomes. Our true identity, who we are, why we are here, what sustains us, is in this story. The stories at every kitchen table are about the same things, stories of owning, having and losing, stories of sex, of power, of pain, of wounding, of courage, hope and healing, of loneliness and the end of loneliness. Stories about God. In telling them, we are telling each other the human story. ~ **Rachel Naomi Remen, *Kitchen Table Wisdom***

If you don't know the kind of person I am and I don't know the kind of person you are a pattern that others made may prevail in the world and following the wrong god home we may miss our star. ~ **William Stafford, from his poem: "A Ritual to Read to Each Other,"**

There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you. ~ **Maya Angelou**

Listening is soul work. It can help the living find the meaning to go on in the midst of trying circumstances, and it can help the dying accept the brevity of their lives. Without listening, there can be no story. And without stories, we cannot complete the unfinished work of healing. ~ **Richard Stone, *The Healing Art of Storytelling***

Stories are told as spells for binding the world together. ~ **John Rouse**

Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself, I am large, I contain multitudes. ~**Walt Whitman**



I spent my whole life deeply connected to spirituality and faith – I even preached the homilies at both my confirmation mass and my high school baccalaureate – but I never even imagined myself in religious leadership until I experienced my own female minister. The priests of my childhood had created in me this limiting story of what ministers looked like, what they knew and talked about and cared about. Which is to say, they certainly didn't wear skirts, they weren't feminists, or moms, they didn't study performance art or appreciate queer theory, or queer anything or anyone, and definitely didn't love pop culture or fashion as much as I did, and do. But then suddenly, I discovered a new story in my female skirt wearing feminist minister. ~ **Rev. Haley, Soul Matters Minister, from her sermon, The Danger of a Single Story**

Research consistently shows that stories mold us. The more deeply we are cast under a story's spell, the more potent its influence. In fact, fiction seems to be more effective at changing beliefs than nonfiction, which is designed to persuade through argument and evidence. Studies show that when we read nonfiction, we read with our shields up. We are critical and skeptical. But when we are absorbed in a story, we drop our intellectual guard. We are moved emotionally, and this seems to make us [open to seeing each other and life anew]. ~ **David Zahl**

"She only nodded. "It's all we are in the end. Our stories."
— **Richard Wagamese (Medicine Walk)**

"History may well be a series of stories we tell about the past, but the stories are not just any stories. They're not chosen by chance. By and large, the stories are about famous men and celebrated events. We throw in a couple of exceptional women every now and then, not out of any need to recognize female eminence, but out of embarrassment."

— **Thomas King (The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America)**

Songs and Music

I am not the clothes I am wearing

True things - JJ Heller

<http://tinyurl.com/j94jl8n>

We Belong - Namoli Brennet

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rgdzz_UEuMM

What if we are stars? Namoli Brennet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yV4WNhdt1k>

For Today I Am A Boy - Antony & The Johnsons

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kslkgAX3uAg>

Tell Me A Story - Skylar Kergil

"Strangers stare and they want to be the first to ask for my life in one word... Am I a boy or a girl?"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbQDTE2s3dl>

Videos & Podcasts

"The Danger of a Single Story"

by Chimamanda Adichie

Our lives, our cultures, are composed of many overlapping stories. Novelist Chimamanda Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice — and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding.

<http://tinyurl.com/jobdkb9>

Read also this excellent reflection inspired by Adichie's TED Talk by Soul Matters minister the Rev. Haley:
<http://tinyurl.com/jjybb59>

Two organizations that collect stories: StoryCorp and The Moth

StoryCorps' mission is to preserve and share humanity's stories in order to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world.

<https://storycorps.org/>

The Moth's mission is to promote the art and craft of storytelling and to honor and celebrate the diversity and commonality of human experience. <https://themoth.org/>

"We are the stories we tell ourselves"

by Shekhar Kapur

Where does creative inspiration spring from? At TEDIndia, Hollywood/Bollywood director Shekhar Kapur ... pinpoints his source of creativity: sheer, utter panic. He shares a powerful way to unleash your inner storyteller. <http://tinyurl.com/j6vxok7>

"The Dance of Storytelling"

by Ish Ait Hamou

Ish writes, directs and dances stories. His life's journey of storytelling pushes the boundaries and creates a new and important art: "the dance of storytelling".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2s7-Ghrzx3E>



Learn about the complexities of Indigenous Identity due to the impacts of colonization:

<http://tinyurl.com/y8rjfhfa>

You Are Not Your Work

"Normal is getting dressed in clothes that you buy for work, driving through traffic in a car that you are still paying for, in order to get to a job that you need so you can pay for the clothes, car and the house that you leave empty all day in order to afford to live in it." - Ellen Goodman <http://tinyurl.com/ycv4zttk>

The art of being yourself - TED Talk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veEQQ-N9xWU>

When People Show You Who They Are, Believe Them

Oprah learned the hard way that if a man shows you he's untrustworthy, believe him the first time. Watch Dr. Maya Angelou discuss this important life lesson with Oprah. <http://tinyurl.com/k9nvat5>

Articles

"The Stories We Tell Ourselves"

by Terri Schanks

"The stories of a person, a family, a culture, a country — they hold us, bind us in ways which are potentially fruitful or harmful, and give us an identity."

<http://tinyurl.com/y7emvyqa>

Neil Gaiman on Why Scary Stories Appeal to Us, the Art of Fear in Children's Books, and the Most Terrifying Ghosts Haunting Society <http://tinyurl.com/yamdlnmx>

"Tell Me a Story" by Richard Hamilton

"Our brains seem wired to try to seek out a narrative. It is how we make sense of the world."

<http://www.dailygood.org/more.php?n=5837>

"11 Things you Should Know About Aboriginal Oral Traditions": <http://tinyurl.com/y8pg4pmb>

Movies & Television

Boyhood

Epic in technical scale but breathlessly intimate in narrative scope, *Boyhood* is a sprawling investigation of the human condition.

<https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/boyhood/>

Big Fish

If you come from a family of storytellers, there's no better (or worse) way to celebrate the tradition than by watching *Big Fish*.

http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1127787-big_fish/

The Thin Blue Line

Yes, it's called a documentary but this is really one of the best detective stories you'll ever encounter. A great adventure into how deeply we can believe that we possess the "truth of the story" but still be wrong!

http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/thin_blue_line/

Monumental Myths

Travel across the United States in a 1965 Airstream Trailer as filmmaker Tom Trinley visits historic sites and monuments unveiling the many sides of history not told on the landscape or in history books. On-camera appearances by Howard Zinn, James Loewen, Lonnie Bunch and Adam "Fortunate Eagle" Nordwall. Inspired by "Lies My Teacher Told Me" and "A Peoples' History of the United States." Full Movie here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQIMrw8gSVQ>

Race: The Power of an Illusion

"In producing this series, we felt it was important to go back to first principles and ask, What is this thing called "race?" - a question so basic it is rarely raised. What we discovered is that most of our common assumptions about race - for instance, that the world's people can be divided biologically along racial lines - are wrong. Yet the consequences of racism are very real."

<http://tinyurl.com/b3xq>

A Prairie Home Companion

A celebration of the power of storytelling.

<http://tinyurl.com/yc28nszk>

The Fog of War

A sad but mesmerizing exploration about how power and war almost always leads one to twist the story.

http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/fog_of_war/



Stories We Tell

Families create their own narratives. Stories are passed on from generation to generation, and in this way the past continues to live, but it can also be obscured or distorted. Family arguments often come down to who "owns" the narrative, or which version is decided upon as the "true" one. Sarah Polley's fascinating documentary, "Stories We Tell," is ostensibly about her mother, Diane Polley, who died in 1990. A powerful and thoughtful film, it is also not what it at first seems, which is part of the point Polley appears to be interested in making. Can the truth ever actually be known about anything?

<http://storieswetellmovie.com/>

Books

***The Truth About Stories* by Thomas King**

"Stories are wondrous things. And they are dangerous." With wry humor, King deftly weaves events from his own life as a child in California, an academic in Canada, and a Native North American with a wide-ranging discussion of stories told by and about Indians. ... King reminds the reader, Native and non-Native, that storytelling carries with it social and moral responsibilities. "Don't say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You've heard it now."

<http://tinyurl.com/jd2gz25>

***The World Is Made of Stories* by David R. Loy, a Buddhist writer**

In this dynamic and utterly novel presentation, David Loy explores the fascinating proposition that the stories we tell — about what is and is not possible, about ourselves, about right and wrong, life and death, about the world and everything in it — become the very building blocks of our experience and of reality itself. Loy uses an intriguing mixture of quotations from familiar and less-familiar sources and brief stand-alone micro-essays, engaging the reader in challenging and illuminating dialogue. ... Reminiscent of Zen koans and works of sophisticated poetry, this book will reward both a casual read and deep reflection.

<http://tinyurl.com/jf9x56l>

***Everything Is Illuminated* by Jonathan Safran Foer**

With only a yellowing photograph in hand, a young man sets out to find the woman who might or might not have saved his grandfather from the Nazis. Accompanied by an old man haunted by memories of the war, an amorous dog named Sammy Davis, Junior, Junior,

and the unforgettable Alex, a young Ukrainian translator who speaks in a sublimely butchered English, the young man is led on a quixotic journey to discover the truth of another's story that ends up helping him see the truth of his own.

***Life of Pi* by Yann Martel**

When Pi is sixteen, his family emigrates from India to North America aboard a Japanese cargo ship, along with their zoo animals bound for new homes. The ship sinks. Pi finds himself alone in a lifeboat, his only companions a hyena, an orangutan, a wounded zebra, and Richard Parker, a 450-pound Bengal tiger. The Japanese authorities who interrogate Pi refuse to believe his story and press him to tell them "the truth." After hours of coercion, Pi tells a second story, a story much less fantastical, much more conventional — but is it more true?

***Kitchen Table Wisdom and My Grandfather's Blessings: Stories of Strength, Refuge, and Belonging* by Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D.**

In *My Grandfather's Blessings*, Rachel Naomi Remen, a cancer physician and master storyteller, uses her luminous stories to remind us of the power of our kindness and the joy of being alive.

About Kitchen Table Wisdom: This remarkable collection of true stories draws on the concept of "kitchen table wisdom" — the human tradition of shared experience that shows us life in all its power and mystery and reminds us that the things we cannot measure may be the things that ultimately sustain and enrich our lives.

<http://tinyurl.com/js5na5h>

***A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life* by Parker Palmer**

An ennobling field guide to living with the grace and integrity of being your whole self, where soul and role join. <http://tinyurl.com/y7k7ol5r>

List of books for children and families about story:

<https://amzn.com/w/66JE9U4CP03W>

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Packets are for use by member congregations of the Soul Matters Sharing Circle.

Learn how to join here:

<http://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com>

Pub Nights: November 1st & December 6th New Location!

**Pub Night with Debra
The Cat n Fiddle 540 16th Ave NW**



**November 1st & December 6th
7 - 9:30pm**

We have a new location for our monthly pub night. Come for the great conversations and stay for the great food. There are many gluten free and vegetarian options. Resume that fascinating chat you were having with a fellow UU during Sunday coffee hour. Meet old friends and make new ones in a relaxed atmosphere.

Hope to see you there!

Silent Auction



What Time or Talent Can You Donate?

It's time to start thinking about our winter 2018 silent auction. What time or talent can you donate?

I personally had some wonderful times these last 5 months, sharing my auction items: donating a couple of dinners, a pasta making class and a port tasting. It was fun to share my passion for good food and wine and to get to know my wonderful Unitarian community better.

Below is a sampling of some of our terrific auction offers from winter 2017 ...what can you offer for the winter 2018 silent auction?

- Guided bird watching
- Cases of homemade white and red wine
- Italian dinner for up to 8
- Riding lessons
- Cello house concert
- Custom made crocheted cabin boots
- Art classes
- Murder mystery evening
- Computer training
- Sunday service topic

You most likely have a service or talent you have not considered, but that would be valued by someone else. What about donating chess or bridge lessons or a learn to knit session, French lessons or a ride on a motorcycle? Or what about a week at your cottage or timeshare, a dog sitting weekend or a day of sailing on your boat?

All ideas are welcome – Blank bidding Sheets are available in Wickenden on the bulletin board and on the home page of the UCC website. Just complete the upper section and put in the auction mailbox in the church office - basically need a description of the item, value, minimum bid if any, and your contact details. Or contact jane.ebbern@gmail.com or 403-283-7162.

Congratulations to November's Volunteer of the Month: Mary Anna Louise Kovar!

Mary Anna Louise has been Vice President, President, and Past President of our board of trustees (that's 6 years on the board folks) and she is just as committed on the last day as she was on the first. Mary Anna Louise knows every law and by-law on the books. She once said, "I read everything". The surprising thing this is she remembers it all!

Mary Anna Louise has served the congregation in many ways - she was a Lay Chaplain for six years and has also been a teacher in the Children's Program, offered workshops, one on chalice making for example.

For any one of us who has been at a Church service where Mary Anna Louise has spoken, there can be no doubt about her commitment and her love of this faith of ours. She currently serves on the Church Service Ministry Team.

Mary Anna Louise is also an extremely creative and talented knitter. She has created shawls, and many other wraps and scarves with such complicated patterns only the most patient knitter would attempt. But not only does she knit these pieces of art, she donates most of them to the Ujamma Mamas' for their fundraisers.

I'm sure most of you have been asked to sign cards of congratulations, sympathy, or various other milestones; many of these fabulous cards were created by her. There must be an extra hour or two on her clock... Mary Anna Louise is also an animal lover, and her home is something of a "mini zoo" as she likes to say.

Mary Anna Louise, you are a valuable asset to our community and we thank you for it!

The annual congregational business (stewardship) meeting will be held DECEMBER 3, 2017 at noon; we will review the annual reports and financial statements. Please plan to attend.

Volunteer Sign Up Made Easy!

Thanks to everyone who has signed up to volunteer on Sunday mornings with coffee, welcoming, setting up, or ushering. If you haven't had the opportunity to volunteer, or wish to do more, please visit our volunteer sign up page online. We're using SignUp.com. Here's how it works in 3 easy steps:

- 1) Click on one of the links below to see our SignUp.
- 2) Review the options listed and choose the spot(s) you like.
- 3) Sign up! It's Easy - you will NOT need to register an account or keep a password on SignUp.com.

Coffee Prep or Cleanup: There are two separate signups - <http://signup.com/go/ngfHRvc>

Ushers - <http://signup.com/go/LLfnBjt>

Greeters - <http://signup.com/go/tDxnMEG>

Service Setup - <http://signup.com/go/xAYQCXZ>

We'll be happy and excited to see your name beside a job for any of the Sundays this year!
~ Eric, Leslie, Donna, and Brandis.

Operation Cookie – Calling All Holiday Bakers!

For the fourth year, the Membership Committee is organizing Operation Cookie, to send Christmas cookies to members of our congregation who would appreciate some home baking and Christmas wishes. We are looking for other bakers to join us in making cookies. Please bring your cookies to church on Sunday December 10 before the service. We will package them up, and have them delivered that day or in the days following. If you could help deliver cookies, stop by our table at coffee time on the 10th. This is becoming a lovely holiday tradition and we hope **you** will help us make it memorable this year.



Here Comes the Christmas Season!

Hampers -This congregation has been incredibly generous in supporting Christmas hampers. We need a team of 3-4 people to champion it, so the tradition continues. Please let Debra know if you are willing to help.

Christmas Dinner –On Christmas Day, there is usually a dinner here at UCC. We create a family setting and celebrate together. For this to happen we need a small team, including hosts for the event. Let Debra know if you are willing to join the team.

Fruit Cakes Almost Sold Out! Place Your Order Soon!

Our wonderful fruit cakes are almost sold out so don't delay if you want one. Cakes are \$35 each and all profits support church operations. Each cake is almost 1 kg in weight and is baked with the finest of ingredients. It is attractively wrapped and makes a great hostess or corporate gift too. Cakes will be ready for pick-up November 12th- 26th. There are 4 delicious types to choose from:

Mary Smyth's Dark Fruit Cake- raisins, dates, figs, currants, candied fruit, walnuts - fantastic with some cheddar cheese!

Mary Smyth's Light Fruit Cake- candied fruit, golden raisins, and almonds - just perfect on its own!

Mary Jane's Millennium Fruit Cake- apricots, cranberries, figs, apples, pecans - great with vin Santo, orange Muscat dessert wine, ice wine or sauterne !

Mary Jane's Chocolate Fruit Cake- Bing cherries, dates, figs, milk chocolate - terrific with port or raspberry dessert wine!

Email fruitcakes@unitariancalgary.org to order and arrange for payment; or call Jane at [403-283-7162](tel:403-283-7162).



How to Reach UCC Staff

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Office closed Thursdays



Publishing the Quest

The UCC Quest is published 11 times per year by the Unitarian Church of Calgary. Electronic copies are available at www.unitarianscalgary.org/newsletter/. Submissions of articles, photographs, and event announcements are encouraged. Questions about the Quest, please email, quest@unitarianscalgary.org.
The Quest Deadline is the 15th of every month except for July.

ENEWS

The ENEWS is normally published via email once a week on Wednesday. Material for the ENEWS must be submitted by Tuesday midnight. If you would like to receive the ENEWS, please email enews@unitarianscalgary.org

Booking Rooms

As our Church gets busier it is important that if rooms are needed they are booked in advance. Space can be reserved either by filling out the online booking form found here <http://unitarianscalgary.org/calendar/#form> or by contacting the Church Administrator at 403-276-2436 or office@unitarianscalgary.org

Lay Chaplains: **Carl Svoboda** and **Beverly Webber**

Our Lay Chaplains are trained to perform rites of passage, such as weddings, funerals/memorial services, child dedications, etc. They are available to provide such services for a fee to the wider community. (Services for Unitarian Church of Calgary members are provided by the minister.) Our lay chaplain can be contacted by calling the church at 403-276-2436 or via email, laychaplains@unitarianscalgary.org.

The Caring Team

The Caring Team provides support to the members, friends, and families of the congregation. If life has you stressed because of illness, hospitalization, moving, we can help. If you have something to be celebrated, such as a graduation, marriage or new child, we are there with you. We are all part of the Caring Team! Need support, have a concern, or want to be of service? Contact caring@unitarianscalgary.org

Monthly Co-Op Card Fundraiser

Each month we will take Co-op Gift Card orders on the first Sunday. Bring cash or a cheque to church unless we already have your post-dated cheques. Cheques are payable to the Unitarian Church of Calgary. A table will be set up in Wickenden Hall place your order there before or after the service. The cards will be distributed following Sunday.

Please continue to support this valuable fund raiser for our church! Contact: Ev Dewar ev.dewar@kogawa.com, Sheila Ward sggward@shaw.ca or Frances Schaink blue.sky@infovisi.com