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September 2017 17 Volunteer of the Month

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September 2017 Services: Covenant

September 3rd Solidarity: Our Promise

Inspired by the actual events recounted in the movie "Pride" about some British lesbians and gays who wanted to offer support to the families of Welsh miners during the 1984 strike. Though those acts of solidarity bridges of trust were built through personal relationships. Today as we honour Calgary Pride and Labour Day we take inspiration from those 1984 events. Those wanting to attend the Pride Parade will have time to join the parade and are invited to help carry our rainbow banner.

Presenter: Rev Debra Faulk

Music: Jane Perry, Music Director

September 10th Flowing Back

We celebrate a Water Communion ritual when we gather together again after summer wanderings, near or far. People are invited to bring water from their summer adventures, be it from a backyard puddle (and we have had lots of those) or other travels - to pour into our communal bowl to represent our coming back together, everyone contributing to create our beloved community. This invitation into a faith community is both deeply personal and profoundly communal.

Presenter: Rev Debra Faulk

Music: Jane Perry, Music Director and

UUphonia

September 17th Our Covenantal Faith

Covenant is one of those words that can initially sound kind of stuffy, academic and out-of-date. When you unpack its meaning and its practices, covenant holds a whole vision for how to live in this complicated, beautiful and broken world. It is a vision that says we are most human when we bind ourselves in relationship. But not just any relationship – relationships of trust, mutual accountability and continual return.

Presenter: Rev Debra Faulk

Music: Jane Perry, Music Director

September 24th Promises to the Next Generations

The current state of our planet has many of us pondering what we are leaving to the next generations. There are challenges and opportunities. This morning we explore some of the ethical foundations we offer our children and that we hope for ourselves.

Presenters: Rev Debra Faulk & Sheila MacMaster

Music: Jane Perry, Music Director and UUphonia

Debra's Deliberations

Each summer I have the chance to reflect on the year gone by and set some personal goals and congregational minister priorities. September feels like the start of a new year with incredible possibilities; I am feeling incredibly excited about this year, my 8th year in Calgary. Let me share a few of my priority areas.



The issues of privilege have been a focus for me, looking at my own, acknowledging the systemic influence and impact on society and attempting to make conscious those impacts. Then, with that awareness, where possible to work to address and/or alleviate the oppression that is an inevitable consequence of that privilege. I have a deep calling to engage in Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation efforts. There will be a stream at the Western Regional Gathering and I am hopeful that there will be a cohort of people wanting to engage more deeply with me in this work. Please let me know if this is something you are willing to dedicate time to.

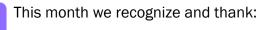
There has been a significant shift in volunteering (in all congregations, not just ours), fewer wanting to sit on committees yet everyone willing to do their part, so we are being intentional in offering more task oriented opportunities. This often requires a lot of trust that the help needed will be there when required. I would encourage everyone to see where they might contribute and sign-up, help build the trust and lighten the stress of organizers. An area that the lack of advance volunteer commitment has had a real impact is in the Children and Youth Program. This year we are following the lead of many other congregations and hiring Class Leads. This will provide consistency for each group while shifting the DRE's job description. We are so fortunate to have the position of DRE filled this year by someone who is excited about working with this shift... **meet our new DRE Sheila MacMaster**:



I feel honoured and blessed to be able to take on the role of DRE (Director of Religious Education) for the children and youth. My family and I have been attending the Unitarian Church of Calgary for the past four years. Some of you may already know me, my partner Paula MacMaster, my other partner Arno Buruma and our six-year-old daughter Morrigan MacMaster-Weir. We are a poly family and part of the LGBTQ community. The Unitarian Church has been a place where we have felt welcomed and accepted.

I've spent the past nine years as an Administrator and I'm very pleased to bring those skills to the position of DRE. I am also a believer in life long education, and I'm currently finishing my Multidisciplinary Bachelor of Arts degree (with a double minor of architecture and drama) at the University of Calgary. This means I bring a broad, liberal arts education and many exciting ideas to the CYRE program. We are blessed with an amazing building and our own black box theatre, and it's my intention to use our space more often and get creative.

My hope for the coming season is all about connection. To help families with children to connect with each other and find those rare moments of relaxation; where the kids are engaged and parents can talk to another adult for more than five minutes. I also want to connect those adults who may not have any children in the CYRE program with these amazing, vibrant beings. I invite all of you to volunteer for just one event or one Sunday, and discover the joy of getting messy with some shaving cream and food colouring (a card making event in November), or find a new perspective on life listening to the serious thoughts of a five-year-old. There is magic in holding a baby, there is revelation in mentoring a youth. We have so much talent and love in this congregation; I look forward to connecting to each of you in coming year.



A huge thank you to all the wonderful and talented people who have kept our community's home fires burning this summer with varied and fascinating offerings for summer services: Penney Kome, Pamela (twice!) and Robert Rickey, Brandis Purcell and friends, Bev Webber

Susan Stratton, and Alan Jessop.

Kudos also to the members of the board, who were in town, and their helpers for doing the shopping the cooking, the serving and the cleaning up for the annual UCC Stampede Breakfast: Ned levitt, John Mitchell, Hazen Corcoran, Jeb Gaudet, Leslie Buckle. Kenzie Love and Brandis Purcell, John Love, Ruby Gaudet, and Lisa Hurrle. The breakfast is a LOT of work. Many thanks also to the band that kept the diners entertained.

Eric Leavitt, led the charge in cleaning walls and floors then painting same in the janitor's closet and furnace room in Wickenden. Eric did yeoman duty removing surplus stuff from these rooms and hauling it to the dump. He and Dick Wilson painted floors and walls. Pop in to have a look and a sniff. He also hired the flooring expert for the Panabaker stage resurfacing and the piano movers to move the piano and cabinet. He removed and replaced the stage base board, removed, and disposed of the old carpet did much other clean-up and supervised the above contractors. He also responded to a last-minute call to clear Wickenden Hall of chairs, etc, so the floor could be waxed by our stalwart cleaners. Thanks, Eric, you're a rock star!

Ottmar Hoch (who is recovering from brain surgery and is still undergoing chemo-therapy) coordinated the conversion of the old 4 ft., T-12 fluorescent fixtures to the ballast-free LED magic bulb while the government subsidy is still in effect. He selected a supplier then he and Dick Wilson drove to south Calgary to order then pick up the supplies. He and Dick worked 3 long days making the key conversions. As of this writing, the job is still in process. Next up: will be replacing the no longer readily available T12, 40 watts for more modern T8, 32 watts fluorescent bulbs with a 1A5 was LED bulb producing just a little more illumination. Some of the newer fixtures in the Barker/Panabaker basement (the CYPT area) were relocated for better light distribution and a case of new more durable, fiberglass ceiling tiles were installed to improve the appearance of that area.

Dick Wilson hired the excellent Eco-Dri carpet cleaners who left the filthy rugs clean, fresh smelling and DRY. A couple of areas were simply given a spot remover or liquid nitrogen chewing gum removal treatment but in a few cases, Eco-Dry elected to give throw rugs a complete cleaning at no extra charge. An abortive attempt was made to set-up a general work bee to wash the Wickenden basement walls then fill the gouges etc. and paint. There was inadequate planning and lead time from Dick Wilson due to the press of the foregoing activities and, as a result, inadequate response. THE NEED STILL EXISTS, IN SPADES. Stay tuned to the eNews and Quest for announcements regarding the next work bee and please pitch in if you're able!

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.

↑↑ UpBeat News with Jane Perry ↑

Happiness is singing in the choir! Singing in a choir is good for you for oh-so-many reasons. Physical, mental, and emotional health all get scientifically-proven boosts from choral singing. So, if you have decided that this new activity year is going to be the year that you do something good for your health, then consider adding choir participation to your weekly schedule. You'll be glad you did!



There are a total of seven choirs that rehearse at the Unitarian Church of Calgary. Three are UCC choirs, and the other four are our resident choirs: groups that rent rehearsal space from the church and who have all become part of the fabric of our extended church community. Read on for more information!

UUphonia! Thursday nights are a grand night for singing for our unauditioned mixed-voice choir UUphonia, a group of thirty-five church folks and friends who meet to sing, share stories, and laugh loudly and often! Our repertoire covers the waterfront, from ballads to upbeat numbers, from spirituals to contemporary classics, from Unitarian music to music and texts from many different religions and sources. This semester, we're working toward our annual winter concert on Saturday November 18, where we'll be focusing on gospel music — the joy, the comfort, and the foot-tapping, hand-clapping verve that has made it a favourite musical style of so many. Join us for our first rehearsal on Thursday, September 6 at 7:30pm in Panabaker Hall, or indeed for any of our subsequent Thursday rehearsals.

Chor Vida is UCC's fifteen-member auditioned chamber choir designed for experienced choral singers with good sight-reading ability. Chor Vida does not hold a weekly rehearsal; rather, we meet to rehearse between three and five times in advance of our participation in a church service or a community event. In the 2017-2018 church year, Chor Vida will sing at the Saturday November 18 winter choir concert; the "Unitarian Lessons and Carols" Christmas Eve service; and on Sunday February 11 as part of the "Building Sacred Bridges" concert at Beth Tzedec Conservative Congregation during Interfaith Harmony Week in Calgary. To audition for Chor Vida, contact Music Director Jane Perry.

The **Multigenerational Choir** is an unauditioned Sunday-morning chorus for singers of all ages and musical stages, where everyone gets to sing the tune! This choir is ideal for families that want a chance to sing in a choir together; for elders who find evening rehearsal slots challenging; and for anyone who loves to sing silly songs, community-building songs, and songs that involve kazoos! Our two rehearsal blocks this year will be: October 29, November 5 and November 12 (singing in the November 12 service); and January 21, January 28 and February 4 (singing in the February 12 service.) We rehearse in Panabaker Hall from 9:30am to 10:00am on these Sundays. Come on out and sing!

Resident Choirs!

Monday evenings: One Voice Chorus. <u>www.onevoicechorus.ca</u> Tuesday evenings: Vocal Latitudes. <u>www.vocalatitudes.org</u>

Wednesday evenings: the BarberEllas. E-mail at <u>barberellascalgary@gmail.com</u>

Wednesday evenings: Calgary Renaissance Singers & Players. www.renaissance-singers.com



Our Unitarian Youth Recognized for Making a Difference!

Note from the Quest editor: This month, two submissions were sent regarding the world-famous UCC Pride banner. The first is from Loretta Biasutti, the second from Duff Bond. Rather than trying to merge the submissions into one, I decided to present both, as written, along with the pictures submitted from Duff Bond. The regular Quest column from the new Director of Religious Education, Sheila MacMaster, will return in October. For more about Sheila, please see Debra's Deliberations on page 2.

Bob and I recently returned from Ottawa, and I would hazard a guess that we were the first members of the congregation to see, one day after its opening, the magnificent new exhibit at the Canadian Museum of History – the Canadian History Hall. Imagine our surprise when we entered the area dealing with Canada's history on human rights, and saw a large piece of the Rainbow Pride banner and a description of how the banner was created by the youth of our church at the time of the federal government's deliberations around marriage equality. There are more than 1.2 million visitors annually to the Museum, who will read about the efforts of our young people – I couldn't be prouder!

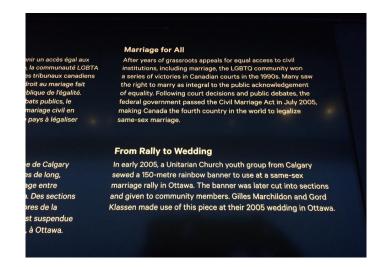


Five of our Calgary Unitarian Youth created a 500-foot-long Pride Rainbow Banner and paraded on Parliament Hill with it in 2005 before the final vote was held for equal marriage rights for same-sex couples. Now part of that banner and a picture of our own "famous five" are being displayed in the National Museum of History in Ottawa/ Gatineau. Christine (Michell) Mishra was excited to see the display in August. She and Sanford Kome-Pond, Cora Bailey, Emily Johnson, and Erin James made us so proud! Part of that banner is carried in our Calgary Pride Parade each year, and other parts are carried in other Canadian Pride Parades as well. One piece now hangs in Panabaker Hall.

This story shows just how much our youth care

about the values they learn through our children and youth programs here at UCC.







Calgary's Pride Festival runs August 25 through September 4 this year. Please join UCC's contingent on Sunday September 3, as we march in the annual Pride Parade, with our own historic Pride Rainbow Banner.

New! Third Sunday Forums

UCC's Social Justice Committee invites you to join us in Panabaker Hall at 12 noon on the third Sunday of every month, after the service. Our plan is to show short videos that relate to the theme of the month, followed by brief (15-minute) group discussions.

Sunday, September 17, 12:00: "Covenant/Promise," featuring TED Talks on the themes of promise-keeping, and poaching and conservation. Moderated by Penney Kome

Sunday, October 15, 12:00: "Healing," featuring TED talks on themes such as a young woman returning to health after a lengthy coma, by drawing on the wisdom and support of a seniors' lodge. Moderator: TBD

Sunday, November 19, 12:00: "Identity," featuring TED talks on themes such leaving an extremely conservative church.. Moderator: Susan Stratton

Engage with Your Beloved Community

Young Adult Dinner - Sunday September 17th 5:30 Hosts: Rev Debra Faulk and Ned Leavitt

Do you identify as Young Adult (ages 19-35)? Please join us for dinner and conversation. Come chat with our minister and Board Chair about upcoming plans that include a focus on your age group. Bring your ideas and your curiosity. RSVP by Sept 15th (if possible) to debra@unitarianscalgary.org most appreciated for meal planning. Please include any food sensitives.

Souper Sunday Welcome Back -Sunday, September 24th Soup lunch after the Service.

Please join us for a soup lunch following the service. Volunteer to bring some soup to share. Help appreciated for set up (9:30) and clean up. Sign-up to be part of the team in Wickenden.

Church Services Ministry Team Needs YOU! Church Services Ministry is a leadership team of 4-7 individuals working closely with Rev Debra to explore all aspects of church services (Sunday mornings, special services). What is the intention and purpose of our communal time together? The hows and whys of our choices of themes, music, structure of a service; why we do things the way we do ... Contact Debra with any questions and expressions of interest.



Sign Up NOW for the Fall Gathering!

Our congregation will be hosting Unitarians from across the Western Region of the Canadian Unitarian Council for the annual Fall Gathering from October 13th – 15th. It will be an interesting weekend of conversation, learning, and fun.

Our keynote speaker will be Rev John Pentland of Calgary's rapidly growing Hillhurst United Church, with an inspiring talk about energizing a congregation, welcoming newcomers, and growing in depth and numbers. Following workshops in this stream will address improving a congregation's visual identity and welcoming young adults.

A second stream will include creating a work of art with Hedda Zahner, and singing Songs of Social Significance with Tony Turner and Jane Perry.

The third stream will feature Rev Samaya Oakley and Jeff Webber leading a workshop on Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation, using materials created by a team including Samaya and Rev Meg Roberts.

Conference attendees age 12 and up will share in the Blanket Exercise, an experiential activity sharing the post-contact reality of Canada's indigenous peoples.

Conference registration will include lunch, dinner and a fun musical evening on Saturday.

An amazing Youth Con for ages 12 and up will be held at our church in conjunction with the adult gathering.

Young adults are welcome and encouraged to attend the gathering, and the Friday and Saturday evening young adult social events.

This promises to be a very interesting weekend, so sign up soon. Early bird pricing is \$135 until September 15th, \$160 from September 16 – 29th.

Visit http://cuc.ca/western-region-fall-gathering for more information and to register.

Note that we are making Samaya's and Jeff's Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation workshop, along with the Blanket Exercise, available to people outside the Unitarian circle as well. Here's a link for registering for that event: http://cuc.ca/truth-healing-reconciliation-registration-calgary-2017. Please pass it on to anyone you think might be interested.



What Does It Mean To Be a Community of Covenant?

Covenant is one of those words that can initially sound kind of stuffy, academic, and out-of-date. But when you unpack its meaning and its practices, covenant holds a whole vision for how to live in this complicated, beautiful, and broken world. It is a vision that says we are most human when we bind ourselves in relationship. But not just any relationship – relationships of trust, mutual accountability, and continual return.

This is not what our culture teaches us. Our culture teaches us that what it means to be human is to be an individual – self-defined, self-determined, separate even. But our UU covenantal theology affirms that being human comes down to the commitments we make to and with each other – the relationships we keep. We become human through our promises to and with each other.

And even more than that: covenantal theology doesn't just say that we become human through our promising, but also when we break those promises, and yet somehow find ways to reconnect and begin again – when we repair the relationship because we know we need each other, even when we think the other isn't doing enough, even when the other is annoying us, or isn't listening well, or isn't doing things the way we want them done – even then. When we realize right then, that we are still connected, and we can't give up – and so we return, and begin again. This beginning again, says our faith, is when the holy and the human meet.

Let me tell you right now, sometime in the next year, maybe in the next few minutes, the people you most believe in and care about are going to disappoint you. Your church is going to disappoint you. This world is surely going to disappoint you. Like, all the time. We all are walking wounded and weary from the way this world can – and does – break our hearts.

And what our faith asks of us, what our faith imagines for us, is that somehow, right at that moment when our hearts break, we will find our way to see through that heartbreak. We will stay put – not close off, not run away, not hurt back – but keep on being in relationship, doing what we can to repair the world and each other, keep on opening our hearts with greater love. And, right then, our covenantal faith says – we will feel not only most human, but also most whole and most at home.

Rev. Gretchen Haley

Senior minister of our Soul Matters partner congregation, Foothills Unitarian, Fort Collins, Colorado



Our Spiritual Exercises

Option A: Whose Am I?

Ouaker teacher, Douglas Steer writes:

The ancient question, "Who am I?" inevitable leads to a deeper one: "Whose am I?" – because there is not identity outside of relationship. You cannot be a person by yourself. To ask "Whose am I" is to extend the question far beyond the little self-absorbed self, and wonder: Who needs you? Who loves you? To whom are you accountable? To whom do you answer? Whose life is altered by your choices? With whose life, whose lives is your own all bound up, inextricably, in obvious or invisible ways?

So, whose are you? This exercise invites you to honor this core covenantal question by living with four different photographs this month. Here are your instructions:

Find and print out four pictures of four different people:

one of a person that represent your promises to those that have gone before you one of a person that represents your promises to those who will come after you one of a person that represents your promises to someone central to your life right now one of yourself – past or present – that represents your promises to yourself

Put these four pictures in a place you will see every day this month. Perhaps tape them to your bathroom mirror or stick them in your wallet. Maybe frame them and place them on your desk or stick them with magnets on your fridge.

Make a conscious effort to reflect on them every day and do at least one thing to further or honor your promise to one of these people.

Bring your four pictures to your small group and share how living with them altered your days. (Note: consider making this a group effort and do it as a couple or as a family.)

Option B: Return & Repair

In this month's introduction, Rev. Haley writes:

What our faith asks of us, what our faith imagines for us, is that somehow, right at that moment when our hearts break, we will find our way to see through that heartbreak. We will stay put – not close off, not run away, not hurt back – but keep on being in relationship, doing what we can to repair the world and each other.

These exercises ask you to do the work of return and repair. Pick a relationship of heartbreak in your life. Maybe it involves a friend or family member, maybe even someone who is no longer living. Maybe a neighbor. Maybe even an institution, like your church or our government. Whoever or whichever it is, make time this month to return to that relationship and work on repair. Simply ask yourself "Where have I withdrawn, been betrayed or broken something myself?" Your heart will know the answer. Listen to what it says. Then open your heart one more time and lean into relationship once again, doing what you can to repair what you can.



Option C: Live in the Plural

UU minister and writer Victoria Safford writes:

We are bound by coven-ant, each to each and each to all, by what theologian Rebecca Parker calls "freely chosen and life-sustaining interdependence." The central question for us is not, "What do we believe?" but more, "What do we believe in? To what larger love, to what people, principles, values, and dreams shall we be committed? To whom, to what, are we accountable?" In a tradition so deeply steeped in individualism, it becomes a spiritual practice for each of us to ask [these questions], not once and for all, but again and again. ... The life of the spirit is solitary, but our answers to these questions call us to speak, call us to live, in the plural.

Full article here: http://www.uuworld.org/articles/bound-in-covenant

What might it be like for you to live "in the plural"? For this exercise, get out a big sheet of paper and write "ME" in the middle of it. Then start adding the people, principles, values, and dreams you're committed to. Draw lines of connection, creating a mind map of the network of covenant you live in.

When you're done, set it aside for a few days. Then come back to it and notice what stands out for you and, also, what is *missing* in your web. What covenantal relationships do you have in your life? How might you more intentionally live in the plural? Bring your mind map and your insights to your small group.

Truth, Healing, Reconciliation (THR) Focus

In Soul Matters we engage each other in clear relational commitments, creating a covenantal relationship. A covenant is a list of the ways we agree to be together as a group. The idea of covenant is central to Unitarian Universalism. Historically, we've been a covenantal religion rather than a creedal religion. In other words, we are bound by the way we promise to treat each other, rather than by common beliefs and creeds. So each Soul Matters group forms a group covenant. This isn't just good group technique, it is a core Unitarian Universalist practice. It is the means by which we are held together in community. Through these promises to each other, we find meaning and connection.

THR Spiritual Practice 1

What does it mean to you to make and hold a covenant in your life? What are the covenants you are already part of? They could include with your congregation, your Soul Matters group, affirming and promoting Unitarian Universalist principles, and marriage vows. Choose one of these and spend time reviewing that covenant and how you are living into it, what challenges you find, any changes you want to make to better support being part of that covenant.

Covenants include those that are made on your behalf if you are a Canadian citizen. What covenants/promised were made on behalf of all Canadian citizens by its governments in the past with Indigenous peoples? Learn more about what it means to be part of a treaty:

Treaty Making and The Significance of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 - watch this video: http://tinyurl.com/y92sybtv

Find the treaty for the land you were born on or live on: http://tinyurl.com/yacfb82



THR Spiritual Practice 2

Treaties and covenants were and are made between British and Canadian governments with Indigenous peoples. What was the treaty or agreement that covers the land you were born on? That you live on now? If there isn't one yet, is it in the process of being negotiated and where is it at in that process?

Spend time researching the answers to these questions. Then read one of those treaties and reflect on how those treaties have been upheld and how they have been breached. What are the impacts of those breaches? How does it relate to the principles you hold? What is one action you want to take in relation to what you are learning? Come back to the Soul Matters group with an insight you are willing to share about your reflections and/or action.

THR Spiritual Practice 3

We mark our UU covenants with ritual: becoming a new member, rites of passage, coming of age, Bridging Ceremony. Ritual and symbols also recognized treaties between Indigenous and British and Canadian governments. Learn more about one way of marking treaties using wampum belts. "Belts made of wampum were used to mark agreements between peoples, and are of particular significance with regards to treaties and covenants made between Aboriginal peoples and European colonial powers." Read the full article: http://tinyurl.com/yagc6vqa

Read about the Hiawatha Wampum Belt, the visual record of the creation of the League of the Haudenosaunee (also known as the Six Nations or Iroquois): http://tinyurl.com/opbjvwo

Spend time considering how you see your values, principles and beliefs reflected in one of the covenants you are part of. What rituals and symbols were and are used? What other ways would you like to mark being part of one of the covenants you are in? Find a way to re-affirm that covenant.

A Few Other THR Resources

http://tinyurl.com/y94aeszs

"On the Wampum Trail" - Learn more about research on restorative research on Wampum belts here on Turtle Island (North America): https://wampumtrail.wordpress.com/

How does what you are learning about treaties relate to your reflections on your other life covenants? Spend time in prayer or meditation on these and see what arises. Come back to the Soul Matters group with an insight you are willing to share.



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 resistance means, but to figure out what being a person of compassion means for you today. So, which question is calling to you? Which one contains "your work"?

- 1. What promises have you made to those who have gone before?
- 2. What promises have you made to those who will come after?
- 3. Have you kept your promises to yourself?
- 4. Have you made a covenant with the holy? What promises have you made to Life itself? To God? To your inner voice?
- 5. What is the most life-giving promise you've made?
- 6. In what ways is a covenant like a treaty?
- 7. Many congregations recite these lines for their chalice lighting: *This is our great covenant: to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another.* How might you adapt this to your own relationship with yourself or with the universe? Perhaps you might finish this sentence: "This is my great covenant: ..."
- 8. Has society ever broken its promise to you? How have you responded when you've witnessed society breaking its promises to others?
- 9. Some of us preempt heartbreak by leaving relationships before others have a chance to break their promises and our hearts. What is keeping you from the risk and pain of covenant?
- 10. Covenant rightly calls us to work on repairing relationship and sticking in there even when it is hard. But sometimes one's covenant with self requires us to put up boundaries and know when to leave a relationship. Is it time for you to put your covenant with yourself first?
- 11. If you're a member of your congregation, what promise did you make when you joined? You probably had a sense of what you'd get, but were you clear about what you promised to give?
- 12. Theologian James Luther Adams names the foundational covenantal nature of the universe as "the love that will not let us go." How do you experience this love? Has it kept its promise to you? How? Have you kept your promises to it?
- 13. What's your question? Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what the theme 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 get your thinking started, and to open you to new ways of thinking about what it means to be "a people of Covenant".

Definition: a formal and serious agreement or promise. In Jewish and Christian theology, an agreement between God and God's people; in Unitarian Universalism, an agreement about how we will strive to be in relationship with one another.

Synonyms: commitment; trust; bond; pact; pledge; agreement; understanding

Wise Words

To seek the truth in love means that even when we stumble, we continue to love. Even when we flail, we stay in relationship. To seek the truth in love means that we talk about the hard things rather than denying that things can be hard. This is a very difficult task. It is not something that I have found easy to do, but it is something that I continue to try to be brave enough to do.

~ Rev. Anne Mason, Soul Matters Minister

Out
of a great need
we are all holding hands
and climbing.
Not loving is a letting go.
Listen,
the terrain around here
is
far too
dangerous
for
that.
~ Hafiz

A covenant is not a definition of a relationship; it is the framework for our relating. A covenant leaves room for chance and change. It claims: I will abide with you in this common endeavor, be present as best as I can in our becoming.

~ Lisa Ward full text here: http://tinyurl.com/zof7xi8

The ancient question, "Who am I?" inevitable leads to a deeper one: "Whose am I?" – because there is not identity outside of relationship. You cannot be a person by yourself. To ask "Whose am I" is to extend the question far beyond the little self-absorbed self, and wonder: Who needs you? Who loves you? To whom are

you accountable? To whom do you answer? Whose life is altered by your choices? With whose life, whose lives is your own all bound up, inextricably, in obvious or invisible ways?

~ Douglas Steer, Quaker teacher

A covenant is not a contract. It is not made and signed and sealed once and for all, sent to the attorneys for safekeeping or guarded under glass in a museum. A covenant is not a static artifact and it is not a sworn oath: Whereas, whereas, whereas. . . . Therefore, I will do this, or I'll die, so help me God. A covenant is a living, breathing aspiration, made new every day. It can't be enforced by consequences but it may be reinforced by forgiveness and by grace, when we stumble, when we forget, when we mess up. ~ **Rev. Victoria Safford** *full text here*: http://tinyurl.com/yanp7mz6

We sometimes wrongly say it is the absence of creed that is most important to who we are [as Unitarian Universalists]. This is wrong. Any one of us could practice religious freedom at home on Sunday mornings. We could practice religious freedom all day long, every day, and never come into community. It is covenant that brings us out of isolation, covenant that brings us out of selfish concerns, out of individualism, to join ourselves to something greater, to become a part of a community that is working to practice love, to dwell together in peace, to seek knowledge and wisdom together, to find better ways to live our lives and live in the world.

~ Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray

Hope is key to every covenant. As I have told my congregation, which takes pride in a heritage of being non-creedal, our forbearers were wise in putting aside creedal questions – "What do we all believe in common? What ancient formulae of faith are we willing to confess together?" in favor of the more covenantal questions: "What spiritual hopes do we share? What shall we promise to one another and to God as we try to live together toward our hopes? How shall we then try to treat one another?" But sometimes I worry that in taking pride in their non-creedal freedom they can easily forget the deep responsibility that their freedom – if it is truly covenantal freedom – necessarily entails. ~ Rev. John Buehrens, A House for Hope



Covenant

Let us covenant with one another to keep faith with the source of life knowing that we are not our own, earth made us.

Let us covenant with one another to keep faith with the community of resistance never to forget that life can be saved from that which threatens it by even small bands of people choosing to put into practice an alternative way of life. And, let us covenant with one another to seek for an ever deeper awareness of that which springs up inwardly in us. Even when our hearts are broken by our own failure or the failure of others cutting into our lives, Even when we have done all we can

and life is still broken, there is a Universal Love that has never broken faith with us and never will.

This is the ground of our hope, and the reason we can be bold in seeking to fulfill the promise.

~ Rev. Rebecca Parker

We can join one another only by joining the unknown . . . [The union] is going where the two of you—and marriage, time, life, history, and the world-will take it. You do not know the road; you have committed your life to a way.

~ Wendell Berry

"Treaty-making processes of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries were undertaken in the spirit of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect by First Nations with the Crown. However, the imposition of the Indian Act and other legislation has directly undermined Treaties, nation -to-nation relationships with the Crown. First Nations' understandings about the nature of Treaties, the significance of the Treaty-making processes and the spirit and intent of Treaties are critical, as are the oral histories and First Nation laws that governed at the time of Treaty-making." ~ Assembly of First Nations http://tinyurl.com/y7sv8a8i

One of the most important lessons I learned in seminary, I learned from a three-year-old boy. ... My wife Sandy and I were visiting with Jeffrey and his parents for dinner one evening. As we sat down at the table, Jeffrey looked around at us expectantly... Now, I expected that they would say some form of grace, but I was surprised. Jeffrey was our leader. He had all of us hold hands while his father lit the chalice at the center of the table. Jeffrey then had us recite their family covenant... Love is the doctrine of this family, and service is its law. This is our great covenant, to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another. Covenant as a personal spiritual practice... taught to me by a threeyear-old Unitarian Universalist. Amazing.

~ Rev. David Pyle, "Covenant as Spiritual Practice" full sermon here: http://celestiallands.org/wayside/?p=900

Videos & Podcasts

"The Mandate: A Call and Response from Black Lives Matter Atlanta"

A powerful two-and-a-half-minute video about how our societal covenant has been broken and how Black Lives Matter leaders are proclaiming a new mandate. The context of the video: "On July 13, 2016, members of Black Lives Matter Atlanta organized civil disobedience to amplify the call for long standing local demands in light of the police killings of Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, and Jerry Williams. Heavy police and state surveillance and presence attempted to halt and block the organizers. These Black leaders would not falter." https://vimeo.com/174684690

"Heresy, Hubris and the Future of our Faith" by Rev. Sue **Phillips**

St. Lawrence District Assembly, April 2, 2016 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuufi5NMsVw

"Eleuthera, Pirates, and Covenant" podcast

Puritan Minister Rev. Cotton Mather loved confessing soon to be executed Pirates. But what happened when a young pirate by the name of William Fly defies Mather and the puritan establishment and does not rebuke his pirate ways? And what exactly is this pirates relationship with Unitarian Universalism? ... Dive in and explore the connection between Eleuthera, Pirates, and Covenant. http://www.pamphletpodcast.org/mathers-wrath/

A three minute video about covenant by UU Youth and **Young Adult Ministries**

https://vimeo.com/68767404



"Breaking the Gender Covenant" by Joy Ladin, from On Being (podcast and transcript available)

"Did anyone ever teach you to be true to yourself?" a therapist once asked me. I had come to her in the midst of what I call my gender crisis — the physical, mental, and emotional breakdown I experienced after 40-plus years of living as the male I knew I wasn't..."

http://tinyurl.com/h2egz3d

Articles

"Bound in Covenant"

A great starting place for this theme. http://www.uuworld.org/articles/bound-in-covenant

"The Five Major Ingredients of Covenant" by James Luther Adams, UU Theologian and Social Ethicist (1901-1994)

"Human beings, individually and collectively, become human by making commitment, by making promise. The human being as such ... is the promise-making, promise-keeping, promise-breaking, promise-renewing creature."

http://tinyurl.com/jzdx9db

"How Covenants Make Us" by David Brooks

"When we go out and do a deal, we make a contract. When we are situated within something it is because we have made a covenant. A contract protects interests, but a covenant protects relationships. A covenant exists between people who understand they are part of one another. It involves a vow to serve the relationship that is sealed by love: Where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay. Your people shall be my people."

http://tinyurl.com/jhs3e2w

"On Covenant", a position paper by the Rev. Sue Phillips

"As [Unitarian Universalist] congregations we 'covenant to affirm and promote' the Principles. Affirming and promoting shared values is important, but it puts tepid commitment at our collective center, asks virtually nothing of us, and offers virtually nothing. This is not covenanting. It is parallel play." http://tinyurl.com/zpwrtpn

Movies

God on Trial

Awaiting their inevitable deaths at one of the worst concentration camps, a group of Jews make a rabbinical court to decide whether God has gone against the Holy Covenant and if He is the one guilty for their suffering.

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1173494/?ref =kw li tt Up

An animated movie about the quest to fulfill the dreams and promises of a lifetime.

http://tinyurl.com/hqvnyzv

Songs

"Nothing More" by Alternate Routes

"We are Love / We are One / We are how we treat each other when the day is done."

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tXzIVjU1xs

"Would You Harbor Me?" by Ysaye Barnwell https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bp7JD5DP5FQ

"Count on Me" by Bruno Mars

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvnaluRm5p8

Books

The Covenant with Black America - Ten Years Later by Tavis Smilev

In 2006, Tavis Smiley teamed up with other leaders in the Black community to create a national plan of action to address the ten most crucial issues facing African Americans. The Covenant with Black America, which became a #1 New York Times bestseller, ran the gamut from health care to criminal justice, affordable housing to education, voting rights to racial divides. But a decade later, Black men still fall to police bullets and brutality, Black women still die from preventable diseases, Black children still struggle to get a high-quality education, the digital divide and environmental inequality still persist, and American cities from Ferguson to Baltimore burn with frustration. ... So Smiley calls for a renewal of The Covenant, presenting in this new edition the original action plan—with a new foreword and conclusion—alongside fresh data ... to underscore missed opportunities and the work that remains to be done.

http://tinyurl.com/zsa7fbq

An interview with the author, Travis Smiley: http://tinyurl.com/h6dhcrn

Not for Ourselves Alone: Theological Essays on Relationship, edited by Laurel Hallman and Burton D. Carley

These twelve essays from Unitarian Universalist leaders emerge as part of a movement in the faith from focusing on individual identity to relational connectedness. Through personal stories and thoughtful reflections, the contributors describe how we might grow our souls through our connections with one another and with the Holy.

http://tinyurl.com/ntwgblx

Sacred Ground: Pluralism, Prejudice, and the Promise of America by Eboo Patel

In Sacred Ground, author and renowned interfaith leader Eboo Patel says this prejudice is not just a problem for Muslims but a challenge to the very idea of America. Patel shows us that Americans from George Washington to Martin Luther King Jr. have been "interfaith leaders," illustrating how the forces of pluralism in America have time and again defeated the forces of prejudice. And now a new generation needs to rise up and confront the anti-Muslim prejudice of our era. To this end, Patel offers a primer in the art and science of interfaith work. http://www.uuabookstore.org/Sacred-Ground-P17840.aspx

List of books for children and families about covenant: http://tinyurl.com/ydac2cp5

Come to Pub Night Wednesday, September 6th

Pub Night with Debra, Wednesday, September 6th, 7pm-9:30pm

at the Getto Boys, 720 16th Ave NW, Lower Level.

Put on your calendar now to join us this Wednesday, September 6th (*and every first Wednesday of the month!*) downstairs at Getto Boys. Here is a chance to continue the conversations you started at coffee hour...and just wished you had more time for. And enjoy a good selection of drinks and food (including many gluten free and vegetarian options).

Parking is available on the east side of the building. Hope to see you there!

Funds to the Church - Purchase Co-Op Gift Cards

The church receives 4% of gift card orders totaling less than \$5000 6% of gift card orders totaling \$5000 - \$9999 9% of gift card orders totaling \$10,000 or more.

There are 2 types of Co-op gift cards. One Co-op gift card is for grocery and gas purchases at the Co-op grocery stores and gas bars. The Co-op liquor gift card is solely for purchases in Co-op Wine and Beer stores. These gift cards can be used either as gifts or for your own purchases. If using a gift card for gas purchases, payment must be made inside the store. Please specify at the time of ordering which type of gift card(s) you are requesting. Any questions; please ask at the order table.

Gift card orders - Sunday, September 3, 2017 Gift card pickup - Sunday, September 10, 2017

If you have not purchased a gift card before, here is how to do it:

- 1. On the first Sunday of the month, bring cash or a cheque to church, payable to the Unitarian Church of Calgary. Place your order at the table set up in Wickenden Hall before or after the service. If you are not going to be at church on the first Sunday of the month and we don't already have post-dated cheques from you, please leave your cheque in Co-op Card/Fruit Cake Cheques mail slot in the church office.
- 2. The gift cards will be distributed on the second Sunday of the month. If you are unable to pick up your card on that day, you can collect it on the next Sunday.
- 3. Use the gift cards like cash when you make purchases (groceries, gas or liquor) at Calgary Co-op. You receive immediate cash discounts with gas purchases that can be used in Co-op stores. If you become a member of the Calgary Co-op you also receive dividends at the end of each year! That's how easy it is!

Any questions? Contact: Ev Dewar <u>ev.dewar@kogawa.com</u>, Sheila Ward <u>sggward@shaw.ca</u>, Frances Schaink <u>blue.sky@infovisi.com</u>, Alex Russell <u>itfromblighty@gmail.com</u>

Tsuu T'ina Reserve Pow Wow

On July 29^{th,} a group of eight Unitarians attended the Pow Wow at the Brag Creek site. The drumming, singing and dancing of the many competing groups was a delight to experience. The multi-color costumes on display by the competitors were a feast to the eye. Hours of preparation must have been involved. From our seats, we easily accessed the surrounding tepees, and food and sales court. On the lookout for fry bread we happened upon bannock burgers which afforded a mighty lunch! A neighbor from Hobbema informed us that by far the most guests were from off reserve. This Pow Wow is a regional event that attracts Aboriginals from far and wide. One Blackfoot Chief described the gathering "as a happy event – a 'Love-In'". Another called it "a bit of heaven in Treaty Seven". We felt touched by the opportunity to share this event with our Aboriginal neighbors.

Congratulations to September's Volunteer of the Month: Bob McPherson!

The Board of Trustees is pleased to have chosen Bob McPherson as our Volunteer of the Month. Bob has a long history with the congregation; he and his wife Marion became members in 1979.

Bob has filled many roles at UCC over the years. One of his abiding interests is the environment, and he was an active member of the Green Sanctuary Committee for many years. He was one of the group that submitted the original application for Green Sanctuary status to the UUA, and led the community garden pilot project. Many of us will remember him for introducing the 'red wigglers' to our composting program, and ensuring they were cared for, with the help of the children in RE. For many years Bob participated in the annual Tower Climb for Wilderness, and at age 82, won the Alberta Wilderness Association's prize for the most climbs (3) for men 75 and over. He was also active in getting the solar panels installed on the church building.

In earlier years, Bob also worked with Physical Plant Committee. He coordinated UCC's involvement with Inn from the Cold (providing volunteers at two United Churches) for several years. He coordinated the Sunday Night Book Discussion Group, and participated in monthly Music Listening evenings.

The church library was named in honour of Bob, who made significant donations from his personal collection and organized what had been a real "mishmash" into a functioning lending library focused primarily on non-fiction books of interest to Unitarians.

Marie Collins, who once served as RE Director, recalled how, when she first started, Bob and Marion came to her and asked, "What do you need?" Marie made a list and Marion and Bob started in, cleaning toys, painting, creating an office, and generally helping get things organized. We can all imagine what it felt like to receive such an offer!

Bob is an excellent public speaker, and has participated in and led lay services on topics dear to his heart, including humanism, Aboriginal affairs, and the interdependent web. When called upon to "say a few words" at memorial services, Bob is sure to come up with humorous and touching memories of the person he had known so well.

All the people who contributed to this picture of Bob mentioned how he quietly "gets things done," competently, and with little fanfare. In Marie's words, "There's probably not a spot in the church that hasn't been touched by Bob."

Volunteer Opportunities/Committee Engagement

Are you interested in getting involved in this community – curious about what committees do – when they meet?

Here are a few contacts:

Social Justice 3rd Wednesday 4:30 socialjustice@unitarianscalgary.org

Membership 1st Wednesday 2:00 membership@unitariancalgary.org

Green Sanctuary 1st Monday 7:00 greensanctuary@unitarianscalgary.org

Church Services churchservices@unitarianscalgary.org

Physical Plant TLC as needed for the building ppp@unitarianscalgary.org

Refugee Update

Desalegnn and Worknesh recently started working five days per week for GDI Cleaning Services, cleaning at an office building downtown. They're in the same building, working the same hours. They report that they like the people at GDI, and feel they are being well treated. The terrific thing is that they can continue their English studies and earn an income at the same time. Our financial support, as their sponsor, comes to and end on September 15, one year after arrival, and with their jobs they will be earning about as much as we were giving them.

Workenesh has returned to her English classes, starting Level 3. She was at "pre-beginner" level when she first came to Canada, so this is great progress! Desalegnn is also doing very well. A year ago, he was assessed at Level 4 in listening and speaking, Level 2 in writing and reading. He has graduated from Level 4 in all categories, and has been accepted at Columbia College for his Level 5. Should he graduate from level 5, he could be considered for an apprenticeship program.

As for Tareq and his family, they continue to languish in Turkey, with no word as to when their application might be processed. Members of the Refugee Sponsorship Committee continue to stay in email contact with Tareq. Most recently, he reported that his status on the Immigration website had changed from "application received" to "in process." It is hard for us to imagine what life in Turkey is like for Tareq and his family, as the adults are not allowed to work legally, and the children are not allowed to attend school.

The Canadian Unitarian Council has joined with other faith groups and is encouraging Unitarians to write federal Ministers and MPs urging action regarding the long delays in processing refugee submissions, particularly private sponsorships where the money has been raised and groups are ready to help. Please see the article on <u>A Campaign to Fix Canada's Broken Refugee System</u>, from the CUC's latest E News. Contacting the appropriate officials is one thing we can do to try to help Tareq and his family.

Meet Your Lay Chaplains and Find Out About Lay Chaplaincy

On Sunday October 1, the Lay Chaplaincy Committee and your Lay Chaplains will be holding a lunch in Panabaker Hall after the service. Come and hear stories from Lay Chaplains, both current and past, and find out more about the wonderful experience of being a Lay Chaplain.

One of our current Lay Chaplains is due for retirement from the role, and we are looking for folks who might be interested in continuing his legacy.

Everyone welcome whether you might be thinking of one day becoming a Lay Chaplain or not. Please RSVP to laychaplains@unitarianscalgary.org by September 24 so we will have an idea of how many will attend for lunch.

Theme Based Ministry

Each month our Sunday services hold the focus of an over-arching topic/theme, such as integrity, compassion, or joy. The presenters approach each month's theme in a variety of ways, all with the intention of taking us deeper. You will hear about the theme on Sunday mornings and in the monthly Reflections section of the Quest that provides the opportunity for personal exploration of the theme with questions, reading and other resources. Everyone is encouraged to contribute readings, poetry, books, vignettes, movies ... about the Themes. (please send in by the 15th of the previous month). The other component of Theme Based Ministry are the small discussion groups, Theme-based Listening Circles (TLCs).

Theme-Based Listening Circles (TLCs)

Facilitated small groups of up to 10 people meet at various times and locations toward the end of each month to reflect together on the theme of the month. These groups offer the opportunity for deepening relationships, self-awareness, enhancing listening skills, personal growth and spiritual development. Curious what they are like - an opportunity for a 'trial' session will be offered Wednesday Sept 20th, 7:00 - 9:00 or Sunday Sept. 17th 12:30 - 2:30.

Confirmed session at this time (more will be added as people sign up) are 4th Sunday 12:00 - 2:00; 4th Wednesday 1:00 - 3:00. If you would like to host a TLC on a particular day of the month in your home or common room, contact Rev Debra or Lynn Nugent. We will provide the facilitators. Please note it is important to sign-up in Wickenden or online for either the trial or regularly scheduled sessions.

Themes for September 2017 - May 2018

September Covenant (Promise)

October Healing

November Identity (Story)

December Presence

January Prophecy

February Interdependence

March Risk

April Transformation (Change)

May Embodiment

*4-Others for September: Habitat for Humanity Interfaith Build The goal is \$ 1 million to build 12 units. Currently,\$750,000 has been raised. For more information about the Interfaith Build, go here: https://fundraise.habitatsouthernab.ca/calgary/

events/interfaith-build-days/e88187

*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 to Reach UCC Staff

Minister Rev. Debra Faulk

debra<u>@unitarianscalgary.org</u>

403 702-6486

Director of Religious Exploration / Youth Program Coordinator Sheila MacMaster <u>dre@unitarianscalgary.org</u>

Music Director Jane Perry music@unitarianscalgary.org

Church Administrator
Martha Mantikoski
office@unitarianscalgary.org
403-276-2436
Monday -Wednesday & Friday
9am to Noon
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 the 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 <u>caring@unitarianscalgary.org</u>

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.