



The Quest

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December 2017 Services: Presence

December 3rd Power of Presence

An aspect of this month's theme is 'being with' as present with another. It is one of the greatest gifts we can give and yet we can struggle with how. This service will also include the awarding of this year Irvine Award for Justice to Susan Gillies – Executive Director of the Calgary Women's Center.

Presenter: Rev Debra Faulk and Social Justice Committee members

Service Leader: Kathryn Burwash

Music: Music Director, Jane Perry with UUphonia

season, we will honour how you are feeling in your heart, no matter what that may be.

A light meal will follow the service

Presenter: Rev Debra Faulk

Music: Jane Perry

December 17th Presence of the Holy

One of the aspects of the theme of presence as mentioned in our Reflections pages is "theologians tend to come at presence from the perspective of "otherness." Their concern is not just that we pay attention to the present moment, but that we notice a transcendent Presence that is woven through all moments.

Presenter: Rev Debra Faulk

Service Leader: Hendrik Schaink

Music: Music Director, Jane Perry with UUphonia

December 10th Children's Pageant

This year's Christmas Pageant is an adaptation of "The Little Christmas Tree" directed by Michael Leboldus. 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.

December 14th Missing Presence?

Blue Christmas 5:30 – 6:30 pm

A special Blue Christmas service to honour the pain many feel around the holidays. The merriment of the Christmas season often reminds us of what we've lost or never had. This will be a quiet service of readings, reflections, and candle lighting, with room made to honour sorrows and pains in our lives. Rather than encouraging you to get happy or in the spirit of the

December 21st The Sun's Returning Presence - Honouring Solstice

7:00 pm

On this the shortest day of the year, we gather with expectation of the lengthening days to come, to celebrate the turning of the season with pagan ritual, followed by a mummer's play and wassail. Please join us everyone and bring a length of ribbon and some greenery and perhaps a few sweets to share. **Presiding:** Brandis Purcell, Rev Debra Faulk and Ronnie Joy Leah

~Continued inside....

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

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



December 24th Sacred Night, Holy Night Unitarian Lessons and Carols**7:00 – 8:00 pm**

With readings and music and of course the traditional interactive singing of 12 Days of Christmas and the candlelight Silent Night we gather on this Christmas Eve to celebrate the essence of this holiday of kindness, compassion, sharing and the recognition of every birth, every child, everyone as a holy birth.

Presenters: Rev Debra Faulk and Friends**Music:** Music Director, Jane Perry with Chor Vida**December 24th Presence of Light**

This season of the turning of the year has celebrations in most cultures and religions. Many of them center around light and its importance. This morning will explore some and find the threads that bind them and us together.

Presenter: Rev Debra Faulk**Service Leader:** Mary Anna Louise Kovar**Music:** Music Director, Jane Perry**December 31st Fire Communion**

One of the traditions of the Unitarian Church of Calgary as we enter the New Year is a Fire Communion. This ritual is a shared acknowledgement of the experiences and lessons of the past year and an opportunity to make intentional choices for the year to come. We do this with gratitude for what has been experienced and hope for the future. Come join us in the celebration.

Presenters: Mary Anna Louise Kovar and Kathryn Burwash**Young Adult Group: What's on for December?**

Young Adults, is a self-defining group (18+ - 40ish), with plans to create social opportunities to connect. In the coming months, watch for movie nights, pot-lucks, post-service lunches and more. Paula MacMaster and Ben Bradt are the lead contacts. If you would like to have your name added to the email list, please send your preferred email to youngadults@unitarianscalgary.org Save the Date to join this group starting:

Friday, December 1st Young Adult RPG (Role Playing Game), Dungeons and Dragons. New players welcome. Room 4, 6pm to 9:30pm. Contact Ben at redwalrus272@gmail.com for details.

Saturday, December 2nd Young Adults Board Game Night. We have some games or bring your own & potluck snack to share. Room 4, 2pm to 6pm. Contact Paula macmasterpaula@gmail.com

Wednesday, December 6th Pub Night 7:00-9:00 at The Cat n Fiddle 540 16th Ave NW

Debra's Deliberations

I have been reflecting on this month's theme of Presence and the significantly different understandings of this concept. One is that sense of being in the moment, living fully in the present, always aware that the past shapes us and the future calls us. Yet it is in the present that we can truly be with each other, being "present with" is a message. Then there is the sense of presence greater than ourselves. From my perspective not an entity, rather a deep sense of profound interconnectedness.



Presence as a theme, is about the present moment, being present and the sense of Presence. How timely, rich, and meaningful to engage these concepts in this season when perhaps, more than any other, we take time to be present with each other, our families and with our capacity to be generous to and also with 'the other'.

To quote this month's Reflections *"the world is full of unnoticed gifts and grace. It's a message perfectly fit for this month that so often celebrates presents over presence. In the face of commercials and billboards that tell us our lives will finally be complete if we stuff them with a few shinier objects or plastic gadgets, our spiritual traditions come along and remind us that our lives are already complete. Their message: The greatest gift of the holidays is noticing the many gifts that have been sitting there all along."*

May the many blessings of this season be with you all! May you make a gift of time to be with each other and those you love; to be in the moment aware and grateful for the many gifts you've been blessed with all along.

Debra's Sabbatical Plans – January 1st, 2018 – February 15th, 2018

Part of my Letter of Call includes a month of sabbatical time for every year worked. This is time for renewal, study, reflection and discernment, important activities that rarely afforded time during usual daily operations. A sabbatical for a professor is often one full year every seven. In my eight years here I took a four-month sabbatical in early 2016. In discussion with Committee on Shared Ministry and consultation with the Board of Trustees, the proposal for me to take shorter, more frequent sabbaticals was affirmed. The first of these will happen in 2018. A bit about my plans – I will be attending the tri-annual Institute for Excellence in Ministry, professional development provided by the UU Minister's Association; have a great reading list (happy to share). I will be back in Calgary for February focusing on the coordination of UN World Interfaith Harmony Week. During my sabbatical time there will be amazing Sunday Services; the January Quest will include details as well as pastoral care contacts.

4-Others

December 4-Others Inn from the Cold: Child and family homelessness is growing at an alarming rate. Their mission is to provide shelter, sanctuary and healing to assist homeless children and their families achieve independence.

Interfaith Food Bank

***4-Others for December:** **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.
(Drop-in tea with the minister 2:00-3:00)

Other times, please book an appointment.
(403) 702-6486

The 2017 William Irvine Award Goes To:

UUC's Board of Trustees and Social Justice Committee are pleased to announce that the 2017 William Irvine Award goes to Susan Gillies, and The Women's Center of Calgary!

As the Center celebrates its 20th anniversary and its 20th year with Susan Gillies as Executive Director, UCC celebrates The Women's Center and its operating philosophy that every person has inherent worth and dignity.

"Every woman needs help at some point in her life," says Gillies, "and every woman has something she can help with." That spirit of reciprocity has helped build a Center with 16 staff supporting 750 volunteers who help more than 8000 women a year meet their needs, from cup of coffee and a chat, to groceries and toiletries, to legal clinics and social service referrals.

Unique, independent, altruistic and pioneering, Susan Gillies and The Women's Center of Calgary's contributions honour the spirit of William Irvine's presence in Calgary.



Co-Op Gift Cards for the Holiday Season Raise funds for the church

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.

NEW! We accept cheques, cash and e-transfer

There are 2 types of Co-Op gift cards. One Co-Op gift card is for grocery and gas purchases. 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. Please specify at the time of ordering which type of gift card(s) you are requesting.

Place Gift card orders - Sunday, December 3, 2017

Pickup Gift cards - Sunday, December 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 funds to church, or you can ask about making an e-transfer. Place your order at the table in Wickenden Hall before or after the service. If you are not going to be at church on the first Sunday of the month, you can leave post-dated cheques in the 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 at Calgary Co-Op. That's how easy it is!
- Any questions? See the Order Table on Sunday or Contact: Ev Dewar ev.dewar@kogawa.com, Sheila Ward sggward@shaw.ca, Frances Schaink blue.sky@infovisi.com, Alex Russell itfromblighty@gmail.com

♪ UpBeat News with Jane Perry ♪

The concerts continue! December is a treasure trove of choral music — enjoy the seasonal riches!

Thursday, November 30 at 7:00pm. The BarberEllas (a barbershop group for queer gals and pals) will be performing as part of HIV Community Link's World AIDS Day concert, with Calgary Men's Chorus. St. Stephen's Anglican Church (1121 14 Avenue SW.) Check out concert information at www.hivcl.org.



Sunday, December 10 at 7:30pm. Calgary Renaissance Singers & Players present “Exultate! Rejoice!”, a concert of Christmas music from the Mediaeval, Renaissance and Baroque eras. Our special guest artist is the luminous soprano Katie Partridge, supported by our resident early-music ensemble the Players. St. Stephen's Anglican Church (1121 14 Avenue SW). Ticket info: www.renaissance-singers.com.

Wednesday, December 13 at 12:10pm. One Voice Chorus presents a free lunch-hour concert as part of the ongoing ProArts@Noon concert series. Cathedral Church of the Redeemer. 604 1 Street SE at 7 Avenue.

Saturday, December 16 at 2:00pm. Vocal Latitudes world-music choir presents its annual winter concert, under the direction of Frank Rackow. These are always sold-out events, so make sure you get your tickets in advance! Unitarian Church of Calgary. www.vocallatitudes.org

Sunday, December 24 at 7:00pm. Chor Vida contributes seasonal anthems to our church's annual Christmas Eve service, called “Unitarian Lessons and Carols.” There will be lots of congregational carolling as well, including our annual interactive musical romp through “The Twelve Days of Christmas”!

And looking ahead to the New Year...

UUphonia's first rehearsal of 2018 will take place on Thursday, January 4 at 7:30pm in Panabaker Hall. It's a great time for new singers to join us — especially as we will be busily preparing for Cabaret 2018, one of the most hotly-anticipated music events of the church year!

The Building Sacred Bridges Concerts are part of this city's Interfaith Harmony Week and feature choirs from various Calgary faith communities. This year, two of our Unitarian choirs have been invited to sing! Proceeds from the concert go to Habitat for Humanity Southern Alberta. Suggested donation: \$20.

*Saturday, February 10 at 7:00pm. UUphonia sings at Knox United Church (506 4 Street SW at 6 Avenue)

*Sunday, February 11 at 7:00pm. Chor Vida sings at Beth Tzedec Conservative Congregation (1325 Glenmore Trail SW)

An Afternoon of Chamber Music, featuring Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra cellist Tom Mirhady, the Springbank Trio, and pianist Jane Perry. Sunday, February 11 at 2:30pm in Panabaker Hall. Tickets will be available starting in January: \$25 regular, \$20 senior/student, or pay what you can at the door. Free for those age 18 and under.



Religious Exploration Program

OWL Facilitators Wanted!

Our Whole Lives provides accurate, developmentally appropriate information about a range of topics, including relationships, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual health, and cultural influences on sexuality. Interactive workshops and lessons engage participants, while step-by-step instructions for program planners and facilitators help ensure success.

Think this is an amazing program and would like to become a volunteer OWL facilitator, but don't know how to get started? Just contact our Director of Religious Education Sheila MacMaster at dre@unitarianscalgary.org. If you have previously taken OWL training and would like to volunteer to be a facilitator again, WE WANT YOU! We hope to launch both Elementary and Youth classes over the coming year.

Facilitator training is happening all the time in the U.S. and only takes a weekend. Tax credits for training expenses are available, along with strong team support and ongoing volunteer incentives.

The Our Whole Lives (OWL) program provides honest, accurate information about sexuality that dismantles stereotypes and assumptions, builds self-acceptance and self-esteem, fosters healthy relationships, improves decision making, and has the potential to save lives. **Be a part of our amazing OWL Team!**

CYRE Craft Corner – The Secret Fountain of Youth



Have you ever made something out of pipe-cleaners? When's the last time you had fun with a Popsicle stick? Playing and being creative helps to energize and keep us young at heart. Need a bit re-charge at the Fountain of Youth? Join our wonderful volunteers and spend some time with the young spirits in our Elementary (ages 7-11) and Explorers (ages 3-7) classes. Even just volunteering for one Sunday may be just the pick-me-up you were looking for. Contact DRE Sheila MacMaster at dre@unitarianscalgary.org for more details and get ready to be creative and crafty!



One of the explorers in our CYRE program.

A Big Thank You to Our Amazing CYRE Volunteers!!

Nursery – Paula MacMaster and Marie Collins **Elementary and Explorers** - Marsha Haug and Heather Walker

Youth – Rebekah Mobley-Kasner, Bev Webber and Kenzie Love **Spooky Spirit Jam** - Catherine Wellburn (stories) and Jane Ebbern (face painting, costumes, and stilts!)

2017 Panabaker Award for Extraordinary Service to UCC

The time is approaching for the Unitarian Church of Calgary to present the Panabaker Award to honour someone in the congregation for extraordinary services provided to the Church community. To do this, we need your nominations. You will find the guidelines for nominations here: [Panabaker Award Information](#).

As well as new nominations, we welcome resubmission of previous nominations, as there have been times when we have had more than one deserving candidate and only one award. To see who has already received the award check the lists (Panabaker Award and Extraordinary Service award) at the end of the Panabaker Award page. Nominations may be e-mailed to secretary@unitarianscalgary.org or placed in the Secretary's mailbox in the Church Office.

Deadline for nominations: **January 8, 2018**

There will be a special award celebration at the end of February. Details will be provided in an upcoming Quest.

A Note to All Committee Chairs

By now, committees will be into the swing of the new church year. If you are a new committee chair, or simply are wondering what was the background that led to a particular committee decision, there are copies of all meeting minutes (from the past 5 years) in the office — simply ask the Office Administrator to direct you to what you need. Earlier minutes are available through the Glenbow Archives — our Archivist Jim Bowman can let you know the easiest way to access them.

And don't forget to always **send a copy of your meeting minutes** to the Office Administrator for the records.

This month we recognize and thank:

Last month we mentioned all the organizers of the WRFG and now we would like to thank all of the volunteers. They are as follows in no particular order.



John Wilson, John Backhouse, Helen Backhouse, Marie Collins, John Collins, Randy Henderson, Neil Morton, Liz Blackstock, Ben Bradt, Carolyn Preston, Donna Antonio, Hedda Zahner, Rebekah Mobely Kasner, Sabrina del Ben, Simon Dunn, Kichiji Kabayama, Marsha Haug, Eric Leavitt, Dorothy Lloyd, Dick Wilson, Lynn Nugent, Jeff Webber, Beverly Webber, Susan Stratton, Ed Taylor, Christopher Feitz, Barry Wilkinson, Cathy McCurdy, Sophia Lang, Vi Kopp, Jane Ebbern, Linda Brown, Debbie Clipperfield, Maggie Studor, Amanda Lockhart, Kenzie Love, Sarah Hooper, Libby Mobely Kasner, Raymond Giroux, Duff Bond, and Miette Kolodchuk.

A HUGE thank you to all our members who showed up in large numbers to attend the various workshops. Without them our WRFG could not have been the success that it was.

A big thank you to all of you who helped put away 55 meals into the freezer at the Caring Cooking Connection held at the church on October 19 to help those less fortunate in our church community and surrounding area.

Also of note are the handymen extraordinaire of the Physical Plant committee. Whether it's that @#\$%*&+ lift, overseeing various tradespeople (locksmith, furnace technicians, roofers, etc) or just changing lightbulbs, these dedicated gentlemen are always willing to help.

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.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Part 1

What's wrong with "When in doubt, toss it in the garbage"?

Our garbage goes into landfills, which take up land that might be better used for agriculture, parkland, or the urban expansion required to accommodate population growth. Stuff that goes into landfills can leach into groundwater. Also, decay of landfill contents is a significant source of greenhouse gasses like methane and carbon dioxide.

What's wrong with "When in doubt, toss it in the recycling"?

Calgary's recycling facility is excellent, but it has limitations. Throwing in stuff the machinery can't deal with reduces processing efficiency, using more energy. See the next Quest for tips on what's hard for the recycling facility to deal with. The City of Calgary's "What Goes Where" is a terrific recycling and disposal search tool found at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7zla933>

When in doubt, look there for advice on the most environmentally friendly way to get rid of stuff.

And remember, the lead R in "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" is REDUCE. Avoid buying stuff that will have to go into the garbage. Even recycling isn't a great solution to overconsumption. The process is toxic and expensive, and it uses lots of water as well as the energy required to turn it into a usable end product. ***What's wrong with "When in doubt, don't buy it"?*** Probably nothing. Both the earth and your bank balance will be the better for it.

~Brought to you by: Your Green Sanctuary Committee

Greetings from Your Friendly Neighbourhood Nominating Committee!

We are a group of people keen to get to know you and we wanted to introduce ourselves. From left to right we are: Simon Dunn, Lisa Hurrell and Dorothy Lloyd. We feel grateful to be part of a congregation that has so many passionate and talented people, and our goal is to help you think about how your skills and gifts might be brought forward to strengthen our work together.

Although our role is primarily focused around recruiting Board membership, we recognize that

leadership comes in many forms. We invite you to think about ways in which your own talents of the head, hands and heart can be bridged into ways of serving our UU community and vision.



Create your community.

Be good to each other.

And do not look outside yourself for your leader...

We are the ones we've been waiting for

-excerpted from a Hopi Elders' Prophecy, 2000

On December 3rd we will be at a table in Wickenden after service – stop by and chat with us!



What Does It Mean To Be a Community of Presence?

Spiritually, presence can mean two radically different things. On the one hand, contemplatives talk of “being present.” Presence from this perspective is all about awareness and remembering to “live in the moment.” On the other hand, theologians tend to come at presence from the perspective of “otherness.” Their concern is not just that we pay attention to the present moment, but that we notice a transcendent Presence that is woven through all moments.

This month, we refuse to take sides. Attentiveness or otherness? Who says we must choose? Isn't it true that, often, they dance together more than they compete? Isn't it true that when we are most present, a powerful presence emerges? Pay attention to your child and slowly their confidence and unique self appears. Pay attention to the flow of your breathing or the flow of the ocean and something bigger than yourself enters the scene. Look for a long time at a singular tree and eventually it presents itself to you as a world in and unto itself.

The underlying message here is that the world is full of unnoticed gifts and grace. It's a message perfectly fit for this month that so often celebrates presents over presence. In the face of commercials and billboards that tell us our lives will finally be complete if we stuff them with a few shinier objects or plastic gadgets, our spiritual traditions come along and remind us that our lives are already complete. Their message: The greatest gift of the holidays is noticing the many gifts that have been sitting there all along.

So how will you engage this dance? What powerful and meaningful presence is waiting for you to be present to it? What gift is waiting and wanting to emerge? What will your awareness bring into being this month?

Our Spiritual Exercises

Option A: Uncover A World in Itself

“The moment one gives close attention to anything, even a blade of grass, it becomes a mysterious, awesome, indescribably magnificent world in itself.” ~Henry Miller

This exercise invites you to tap into Henry Miller's magic. Simply do as Miller suggests:

Pick one place, object or animal and give it your attention and presence until it becomes a world unto itself.

Additionally, figure out your own way of recording the progression from a singular or simple object to an entire world. Perhaps keep a journal and write about something new you notice each time you return to it. Or take a photo of it each time and look back at the photos to see what changes and emerges over time. Maybe just sit with your chosen focus for a whole day and see where it takes you.

Take your time as you chose your focus. Perhaps it's a frosted window pane or falling snow. Or Christmas lights. Or the old toolbox your dad left you whose story and world you've yet to discover.

Consider bringing a picture to your group. Seeing your uncovered world, they just might more easily see even more of their own.



Option B:

The Presence of God (The Sacred/Holy)

“Joy is the infallible sign of the presence of God.” -**Pierre Teilhard de Chardin**

Teilhard de Chardin’s quote reminds us that “otherness” is not other. The presence of the divine presents itself in very ordinary forms. And it is a different form for each of us. Yes, it visits many of us through joy. But for others, it is encountered as the presence of hope or longing, reassuring quiet or unexpected kindness.

What is the infallible sign of the presence of the holy for you? Hope? Longing? And when does it come? When you feel most inwardly centered or most outwardly connected? What physical form does it ride in on? The soft wind when you’re walking in the woods? The vibrancy of color as it makes a painting or the sky come alive? The softness of your beloved’s skin?

This exercise asks you to name it. Come to your group ready to fill in the blank: “_____ is the infallible sign of the presence of holiness for me.” And after you fill in the blank, share one story of when that presence showed up and gave you its gift.

Option C:

Make Your Presents About Presence

“Your children need your presence more than your presents.” – Jesse Jackson

It’s not just our children. We all need it. Who wants a new tie when they could have the gift of being seen? Yes, the grandkids want that check from Grandma, but what they will remember is you asking them to join them for a Saturday as you go through the boxes of old stuff in the attic and telling them the stories connected to that so-called junk. This exercise asks you to creatively engage this truth that Jackson lifts up:

Pick at least one person this year and make their holiday present about presence!

There are so many ways to come at this. Offer your presence by making the gift something you do together. Show them you are present to them and really see them by picking a gift that reflects something especially unique about them. Or help them be more present to life by giving them a gift that helps them stay focused on what’s important or that helps them step back from the blinding busyness of routine life.

As novelist Cecelia Ahern reminds us, “Sometimes, people can go missing right before our very eyes.” Ultimately, that’s what this exercise is about. Give a gift that helps you find those you love again and helps them find you.



Option D:

Indigenous Presence In Our Now Shared Space

Rev Samaya Oakley shares “Not too long ago, I had dinner with Aline LaFlamme, a Metis educator, before the KAIROS Blanket Exercise that South Fraser Unitarians hosted as part of their work on the road towards reconciliation. As we were talking she shared with me the history of the Semiahmoo people who lived on the land where the congregation, and my own personal home, are located. The land was the temporary summer home of the Semiahmoo people. The weir at the mouth of the Nicomekl River made for good clam digging in the tidal mud flats. The peoples came to the Crescent Beach area to harvest the wild berries that grew in the area as well.

Each time I hear the traditional acknowledgement that we say at South Fraser, I have in my mind these people. In my mind’s eye, I can see them setting up their summer camp along the beach, I can hear them laughing, and I can feel their presence fill the room. I feel their presence.”

You’re invited to spend time this month reflecting on the presence of the people who lived on the land you live on before the arrival of settlers. Investigate their connection to the land and take some time reflecting on how their presence on the land influences or affects you today.

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 speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal of these questions is not to help you analyze what Presence means in the abstract, but to figure out what being a part of a community of Presence means for you and your daily living. So, which question is calling to you? Which one contains “your work”?

1. Has the experience of “presence” increased or decreased for you as you’ve gotten older?
2. How might tomorrow be an opportunity to “discover presence”?
3. What absence walks with you more days than not?
4. Who has gone missing right before your very eyes? (“Sometimes, people can go missing right before our very eyes.” -Cecelia Ahern)
5. Have you lost sight of yourself? (“Sometimes, we lose sight of ourselves when we’re not paying enough attention.” -Cecelia Ahern)
6. Would you be more present to your life if you weren’t trying to perfect it or win at it? (“Allow your life to be a work in progress. Do not hurry to mold the masterpiece; Always there is more to be done. Life is always unfinished business.” ~Richard S. Gilbert”)



Your Question

7. When was the last time you created a world in itself? ("The moment one gives close attention to anything, even a blade of grass, it becomes a mysterious, awesome, indescribably magnificent world in itself." ~Henry Miller)
8. Where is your chance tomorrow to love someone with your presence? ("At the end of the day: do others feel loved in your presence? This is the spiritual bottom line." – Masin Kipp; "Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity" - Simone Weil)
9. Whose absence feels most present to you? What can you do tomorrow to feel and honor them more deeply? ("One of the best feelings in the world is knowing that your presence and absence both mean something to someone." – anonymous)
10. Are you living like you deserve to take up space in the world? ("You deserve to take up space in the world." - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie)
11. 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 Presence*.

Presence

Definition: The state or fact of existing, occurring, or being present in a place or thing. Latin: *in:proesentia; proe, before, and esse, to be*.

Wise Words

"This is the first, the wildest and the wisest thing I know: that the soul exists and is built entirely out of attentiveness." ~Mary Oliver

"The moment one gives close attention to anything, even a blade of grass, it becomes a mysterious, awesome, indescribably magnificent world in itself."
~Henry Miller

"At the end of the day: do others feel loved in your presence? This is the spiritual bottom line."

~Masin Kipp

Sometimes, people can go missing right before our very eyes. Sometimes, we lose sight of ourselves when we're not paying enough attention. ~Cecelia Ahern

"When you love someone, the best thing you can offer is your presence. How can you love if you are not there? The most precious gift we can offer others is our presence. When mindfulness embraces those we love, they will bloom like flowers." ~Thich Nhat Hanh

"Learn me slowly; be patient with my pages." ~Pavana



"If your absence doesn't affect them, your presence never mattered" ~Anonymous

Oh, the comfort — the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person — having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but pouring them all right out, just as they are, chaff and grain together; certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and then with the breath of kindness blow the rest away. ~Dinah Maria Mulock Craik

Presence is removing judgment, walls and masks so as to create a true and deep connection with people or experiences. ~Amy Cuddy

The ability to be fully aware of the present moment is also the ability to be "non-discriminating" between the experiences we like (because they are pleasant) and the experiences we don't like (because they are unpleasant). Awareness is non-discriminating because awareness does not want to get and does not want to reject, it just is aware, and accepting of everything that manifests. ~Chan Dao Lu

"Out of our busyness, we are called back into balance, back into ourselves and the silence of present being. But it is not just back into ourselves to which we are called; it is also the awareness of the continuous presence of the environment around us and within us. We are called to remember our relationships and our dependencies. We are called to once again feel the oneness which sustains our being in balance with creation, and to do so with wonder and appreciation." ~Susan Manker-Seale

At the center of the world and in each breath
this is the holy temple, the birthing moment:

giving and receiving love. That is all.

This is the sacred point,

the love in you

meeting the love in the world.

However broken or weary you are,

bring yourself here, in love,

now. ~Steve Garnaas-Holmes

"One of the best feelings in the world is knowing that your presence and absence both mean something to someone." ~Anonymous

Where can I flee from your presence?"

~ **Psalms 139:7**

Life Is Always Unfinished Business

In the midst of the whirling day,

In the hectic rush to be doing,

In the frantic pace of life,

Pause here for a moment.

Catch your breath;

Relax your body;

Loosen your grip on life.

Consider that our lives are always unfinished business;

Imagine that the picture of our being is never complete;

Allow your life to be a work in progress.

Do not hurry to mold the masterpiece;

Do not rush to finish the picture;

Do not be impatient to complete the drawing.

From beckoning birth to dawning death we are in process,

And always there is more to be done.

Do not let the incompleteness weigh on your spirit;

Do not despair that imperfection marks your every day;

Do not fear that we are still in the making.

Let us instead be grateful that the world is still to be created;

Let us give thanks that we can be more than we are;

Let us celebrate the power of the incomplete;

For life is always unfinished business.

~Rev. Richard S. Gilbert



The Presence of Trees

Slowly, I am remembering
the language of awe,
how to take in, say,
the living complexity of a tree
its gnarled trunk,
its ragged bark,
the way its leafy canopy
filters sunlight
down to the brown
carpeted ground,
the way the wind bends my heart
to the exquisite presence of trees
the forest that calls to me as deeply
as I breathe,
as though the woods were
marrow of my bone as though
I myself were a tree, a breathing, reaching
arc of the larger canopy
beside a brook bubbling to foam
like the one
deep in these woods,
that calls
that whispers home.
~Michael S. Glaser

Christmas Light

When everyone had gone
I sat in the library
With the small silent tree,
She and I alone.
How softly she shone!
And for the first time then
For the first time this year,
I felt reborn again,

I knew love's presence near.
Love distant, love detached
And strangely without weight,
Was with me in the night
When everyone had gone
And the garland of pure light
Stayed on, stayed on. ~May Sarton

Perhaps the most characteristic element of Christmas is what we call the Christmas spirit, its joy, its reassessment of life as good. This persistent presence is difficult to explain, but no one questions its genuineness.

~Unknown

"It came without ribbons. It came without tags. It came without packages, boxes or bags. And he puzzled and puzzled 'till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more.?"

~Dr. Seuss

Light is to darkness what love is to fear; in the presence of one the other disappears. ~Marianne Williamson

Realize deeply that the present moment is all you ever have.

What a liberation to realize that the "voice in my head" is not who I am.

Who am I then? The one who sees that.

Life is the dancer and you are the dance.

~Eckhart Tolle

Moving beyond territorial acknowledgments means asking hard questions about what needs to be done once we're 'aware of Indigenous presence'. It requires that we remain uncomfortable, and it means making concrete, disruptive change. How can you be in good relationship with Indigenous peoples, with non-human beings, with the land and water? Beyond Territorial Acknowledgments by âpihtawikosisân



If we open to the moment through our bodies, a whole new level of insight and wisdom can support us in ways our conscious mind cannot. May we all open to a greater level of embodied presence. The great challenge in our busy world is to stay connected with ourselves— with our bodily felt experience, our living wisdom, our sensitivity, and our depth. This intensive retreat addresses this challenge through helping you to develop greater presence in body, speech, and mind and to connect with yourself, your awareness, and your felt experience in a fully embodied way. ~John Welwood

“Your children need your presence more than your presents.” ~Jesse Jackson

“You deserve to take up space in the world.”
~Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Videos & Podcasts

How to Flourish in an age of Distraction

Thoughts on paying attention to how our attention and presence is being stolen especially during the holiday season. <http://tinyurl.com/yb85f3zb>

The Power of Being Present to Your Body

Presence is expressed through body language: Self-image impacts presence, body language impacts self-image. Amy Cuddy's video on Body Language is YouTube's second most popular video to date.

<http://tinyurl.com/nhmt6bt>

Interview on Presence

“Presence is removing judgment, walls and masks so as to create a true and deep connection with people or experiences..” -Amy Cuddy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFiILB6yQrU>

Settling Into Presence

Eckhart Tolle offers guidance for settling into presence and resting in the depth of an “unfilled” moment.

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

Mysterious Ways

“[We are present] to many fewer mysteries in our lives since this technology attached itself to our hips...”

<http://tinyurl.com/y8f2gox6>

The Last Quiet Places: Silence and the Presence of Everything - On Being Podcast

Silence is an endangered species, says Gordon Hempton. He defines real quiet as presence — not an absence of sound, but an absence of noise. The Earth, as he knows it, is a “solar-powered jukebox.” Quiet is a “think tank of the soul.” <http://tinyurl.com/nm37r3y>

Focus: the Hidden Driver of Excellence - Daniel Goleman

“What information consumes is the attention of its recipients. Hence a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention.” <http://tinyurl.com/yb4torpf>

In the Presence of Elephants and Whales - On Being Podcast

We were made and set here, the writer Annie Dillard once wrote, “to give voice to our astonishments.” Katy Payne is a renowned acoustic biologist with a Quaker sensibility. And she's found her astonishment in listening to two of the world's most exotic creatures. She has decoded the language of elephants and was among the first scientists to discover that whales are composers of song. <http://tinyurl.com/p8j62lo>

Articles

Do You Take Up as Much Space as You Deserve? By Lisa Gardner <http://tinyurl.com/y9bo84lq>

(another moving reflection on the same theme:
<http://sexloveliberation.com/taking-up-space/>)

Crying Together by Rev. Dr. Lynn Unger

Maybe we could just sit down and cry together first. In the presence of Black rage. In the presence of white shame. In the presence of grief and despair and the overwhelming knowledge that white men with guns just keep killing people. <http://tinyurl.com/ydfz69td>



Presents and Presence

The nicest gifts people have given me have been enabling, confirming gifts, bestowing understanding and self-esteem, help in time of trouble and delight for ordinary days. What struck me most was the connection between the gift and the giver of the gift and the sense of appreciation for that person in their lives at that time.

<http://tinyurl.com/ybnpt582>

The Gift of Presence, The Perils of Advice

Parker Palmer: Many of us “helper” types are as much or more concerned with being seen as good helpers as we are with serving the soul-deep needs of the person who needs help. Witnessing and companioning take time and patience, which we often lack — especially when we’re in the presence of suffering so painful we can barely stand to be there, as if we were in danger of catching a contagious disease. We want to apply our “fix,” then cut and run, figuring we’ve done the best we can to “save” the other person. <http://tinyurl.com/jx7wkb4>

Movies & Television

Other People (2016)

https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/other_people

The Eighth Day (Le Huitième Jour)

<http://tinyurl.com/y773sdrz>

The Notebook. Being Present for someone who is no longer fully present.

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

The Global Brain: Peter Russell (1983) Explores the idea that the Earth is an integrated, self-regulating living organism and asks what function humanity might have for this planetary being.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CijQTX9kmS8>

Songs

May I Suggest: Red Molly <http://tinyurl.com/yaefdt3j>

Live Like We're Dying Kris Allen:

<http://tinyurl.com/gmefs2m>

One Life [Acoustic] James Morrison

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

Beautiful Day - U2:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=co6WMzD0h1o>

Here's a great instrumental version:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBUMkRnCU3Q>

Ahead By a Century The Tragically Hip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QE2joQsWXJg>

Books

Present Moment Wonderful Moment by Thich Nhat Hanh

<http://tinyurl.com/y7pmv5cy>

Silence: The Mystery of Wholeness by Robert Sardello

“Each of us has an ever faithful companion-presence. Something that is always with us. Something that helps us to live with inner integrity and depth, to see through the outer covering of others and of the world to their purpose and core being, and to get over placing ourselves at the center of everything. This companion-presence is Silence. It never goes away. We go away from it, become distracted and forgetful, and lose the manners needed to nurture companionship with it.”

<http://tinyurl.com/ya4lula7>

Parenting with Presence: Practices for Raising Conscious, Confident, Caring Kids by Susan Stiffelman

“Shows parents how they can transform parenting into a spiritual practice.” — Eckhart Tolle, *The Power of Now*

“Who knew that the child or teen crying in the next room is actually our spiritual teacher? Who would have thought that annoying outbursts and provocative behavior could lead to more conscious, spiritually tuned-in, effective, even enjoyable parenting? Susan Stiffelman’s ground breaking, immensely readable guide teaches all we need to know about how to nurture our children — and ourselves — to become more conscious, compassionate, and, believe it or not, calmer human beings.” — Kathy Eldon, founder and chairman of the Creative Visions Foundation

<http://tinyurl.com/yam9gjed>

Pub Night December 6th New Location!

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



December 6th
7 - 9ish

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!



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 December's Volunteer of the Month: Christopher Fietz



Our Volunteer of the Month for December 2017 is Christopher Fietz, a thoughtful, compassionate, and energetic member of our congregation. Christopher chairs the Information Technology committee and is active in the sound room and on the Physical Plant Committee.

One of our congregation wrote:

"Christopher is always there. Whether he is serving in some official capacity as, say, a member of a committee, or as an individual, quietly doing something in the background that no-one has thought about, he always thinks of how best to serve the church.

Whether it is by long-term service in the sound booth, or membership in several committees, or on-the-spot things like coming out on a cold windy evening to help fix part of the cladding that has come loose—it doesn't matter. He demonstrates commitment and readiness to help. He does not look for recognition, nor does he speak loudly to sway opinion. Instead, he is one of those who are the true backbone of the church: a selfless volunteer who does not wait to be asked but rather simply does. He does not seek to be a leader (as far as I can tell), but he does lead: he leads by example."

And our choir director Jane Perry wrote:

"Christopher Fietz is what kindness looks like in human form. He has been a member of UUphonia for at least the seven years that I have been conducting the choir. He brings his big heart, his excellent questions, and his impeccable sense of rhythm to his singing, and his quiet smile casts a bright light. Last year, Christopher took on the role of Cabaret stage manager. His high standards for his own work and his seemingly limitless patience with the choristers and crew made him one of the best stage managers we've ever had."

Please congratulate Christopher when you see him, our Volunteer of the month for December.

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!

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.

Many Thanks to All the Fruitcake Helpers and Purchasers - \$4447.79 Raised!



In addition to those lovely conversations over the chopping board or around the coffee table, (only after the cakes went in the ovens), and the delicious smells in the church, the other benefit of our fruit cake program is that we sold a record 160 cakes this fall and raised a total of \$4447.79 for our operations budget. This included \$3947.79 from the cake sales plus a \$500 donation to our Minister's Discretionary Fund from a devoted long-term fruit cake fan from outside of the church.

This was a true team effort and I couldn't have run this without the help of the many dicers, choppers, and bakers. A special thank you goes to my baking partner, Joan Brown and to Mary Jane Hussey, our trusted advisor.

This year I placed articles in the newsletters of the communities around our church and we had strong outside cake sales. In fact, this year we sold 37 cakes to church members and 123 cakes to outside friends and people in the community. Many thanks to some of our members who reached out to their circles and sold large quantities of cakes for us. Loretta Biasutti was our record sales person with an order of 16 cakes for her friends! And at time of writing, I already have a 15-cake waiting list so next year we should think seriously about 180-200 cakes. With a few more volunteers, and spreading the baking out over more weeks, we could do this.

Please consider joining us next fall when we put out the requests for volunteers.

And do pass on feedback about these cakes to me - love to have your comments to improve for next year.

Jane Ebbern jane.ebbern@gmail.com

How to Reach UCC Staff

Minister
Rev. Debra Faulk
debra@unitarianscalgary.org
403 702-6486

Director of Religious Exploration /
Youth Program Coordinator
Sheila MacMaster 403-404-1361
dre@unitarianscalgary.org

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 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